Hafa Adai!

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8 DAYS BEFORE Christmas

MVA: November visitor arrivals down 3 percent. » PAGE 3

Inos doing well; rest of family to join him in Seattle. » PAGE 5

Melvin Ada gets 12.7 years in prison

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

» Ada: I defrauded the hospital

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona handed down yesterday a sentence of 12.7 years in prison against former Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. employee Melvin Garong Ada for stealing over $1.7 million from CHCC that was intended for a medical supplier.

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House OKs bill to tax sugary drinks

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The House of Representatives passed yesterday a bill that would impose a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages and concentrates as a means to discourage the consumption of sweets, blamed for the soaring rate of non-communicable diseases in the Commonwealth.

House Bill 19-91, which ultimately became H.B. 19-91, HD4 after revisions, passed on 17 "yes" votes, one absence, and one dissenting vote from Rep. Ralph Yumul (Ind-Saipan), whose floor amendment to allo-

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Dynasty's casino remains shuttered

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The expected Dec. 15 re-opening has come and gone but the casino floor of the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino remained closed despite full-page advertisements in local papers Tuesday and last week.

Calls to Tinian Dynasty reservations confirmed that the hotel and casino has not re-opened its casino operations yet, while calls to general manager Christopher Bishop remain unanswered as of press time.

Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission executive director Lucy Blanco-Maratita did confirm that Tinian Dynas-

See DYNASTY on Page 4

As Terlaje lane closures have slowed motorists traveling through the area. The lane closures are due to work done on CUC's 16 in. water main. At this time, the Department of Public Works along with CUC are working with a contractor to begin proper repairs to the lanes.
DAISY DEMAPAN

CUC: As Terlaje road needs extensive repair

By DAISY DEMAPAN
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REPORTER

A water main under Chalan Monsignor Guerrero in As Terlaje that ruptured on Dec. 6 was soon fixed within 24 hours but repairing the road itself going up to the Northern Marianas College will take longer.

The Department of Public Works and Commonwealth Utilities Corp. are currently working through the request-for-proposals process to begin repair work on the road lanes.

According to CUC information officer Brad Ruszala, the water issue was repaired within 24 hours but the road has yet to be repaired as CUC goes through the procurement process.

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Local

DYS caps training on mental health first aid

As a youth servicing stakeholder, staff of the Division of Youth Services of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs were invited to participate in the "Youth Mental Health First Aid Training" on Dec. 2, 2015.

This training was coordinated by the Systems of Care Program under the Community Guidance Center, who contracted the trainer out of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

A combination of regular staff, DYS interns and DYS parent leaders attended the training. Certificates and Youth Mental Health First Aid cards were handed out to those who completed the program. The purpose of the training was to teach methods of assisting youth who may be in the early stages of developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. ***(DCCA)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Staff of the Division of Youth Services, interns, and parent leaders attend the "Youth Mental Health First Aid Training" on Dec. 2, 2015.

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DYS builds capacity for child welfare collaboration

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Staff and interns of the Division of Youth Services take part in the first "Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative" technical assistance session on Nov. 23, 2015.

The Division of Youth Services of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs coordinated the first "Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative" technical assistance session on Nov. 23, 2015. A total of 24 participants joined the call, including Rota and Tinian DYS personnel and three DYS interns from the Northern Marianas College.

The CWCB technical assistance was made possible by the Children's Bureau under the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. All states, territories and tribes receiving funds administered by the Children's Bureau are eligible for services from the Collaborative. Because the Collaborative is a five-year program, the DCCA-DYS will be involved in a series of technical assistance for the next four years.

The purpose of the technical assistance is to build capacity within the child welfare agency, in this case DYS, to increase coordination, leverage resources and provide more strategic service provisions for clients served. This will include a series of calls and/or visits for assessments/information sharing, capacity building action plan and program implementation. ***(DCCA)***

MVA: November visitor arrivals down 3 percent

November 2015 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands dipped 3 percent compared to November 2014. According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands registered 37,870 visitors in November 2015, compared to 39,137 visitors received in November 2014.

Arrivals from China continued their steady growth, rising 4.4 percent compared to November 2014 to reach 14,477 visitors. The MVA participated in the China International Travel Mart on Nov. 13-15 in Kunming. During the three-day travel fair, the MVA hosted key media on-site to generate media buzz and boost consumer awareness of the CNMI as a world-class holiday destination. Meanwhile, Dynamic Airways is finalizing plans to launch new charter flights from the new gateway cities in northern China to Saipan starting in January, which will generate a further increase in the number of Chinese visitors to the CNMI in 2016.

Arrivals from Korea also grew 3.8 percent in November to 16,848 visitors. The increase is attributed in part to the launch by Asiana Airlines of an additional daily flight from Incheon to Saipan from Oct. 25 using an Airbus A321 with 171 seats, which provides an additional 5,000 seats per month out of the Korean market. The MVA launched a major "All New Marianas" online promotion with Asiana Airlines to strengthen FIT sales by emphasizing the Marianas' image as clean and safe, generating an estimated total of 350,000 exposures to target customers online.

Arrivals from Japan fell 37 percent in November to 4,423 visitors as the CNMI felt the full effect of Delta Air Lines cutting its Narita to Saipan night flight in October, a move that has dropped airlift from the Japan market to just one daily flight and further deepening the crisis in the Japan market for the CNMI. In early December, MVA and Delta jointly organized a familiarization tour to the CNMI for over 50 Delta staff from across Japan, and a meeting was held between a CNMI delegation led by acting governor Ralph DLG Torres and top regional Delta management to strategize on revitalizing the market. The MVA is also working with Delta, the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, Japan Saipan Travel Association, and the MVA Japan Ad Hoc Committee on several strategies, including vacation-oriented familiarization trips for major Japan travel agency staff to learn about the features that differentiate the CNMI from other beach destinations and to encourage key Japanese tour wholesalers to increase investment in CNMI promotions. To reverse the drop in airlift from Japan, the MVA has also added new airlift development specialists to the team to secure the re-launch of Delta night flights, boost the number of Asiana charters from Osaka and/or Tokyo, and conduct in-depth negotiations with all target low-cost carriers, including Air Asia, which is now actively evaluating new flights from Japan to the CNMI.

Economic highlights

Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government has kept its basic economic assessment unchanged in November 2015. The latest report came despite recent government data showing that the Japanese economy shrank 0.8 percent on an annual basis in the July-September quarter. Still, the government did not change the overall economic assessment because "the environment surrounding companies is improving" partly thanks to a weak yen, an official spokesperson said. During the month of October, the yen remained virtually unchanged against the U.S. dollar (120.03 yen).

Terrorist attacks that killed nearly 130 Parisians had an impact on global financial markets and rattled Seoul. Uncertainty in financial markets over fears of additional attacks and a possible contraction in the European economy could trim already lowered projections for the global and Korean economies. The Korean Ministry of Strategy and Finance said it will watch for any negative impact on the country's tourism and airline industries. The South Korean won/dollar exchange rate rose 14.01 won over the past month to close at 1,156.74 against the U.S. dollar. ***(MVA)***

Reshuffle at HSEM, DPS, DOC

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Acting governor Ralph DLG Torres shook up the top posts of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety, and Department of Corrections yesterday in the wake of the resignation of former special assistant for Homeland Security Marvin Seman.

Effective, Dec. 17, 2015, DPS Commissioner James Deleon Guerrero will move to HSEM and serve as its acting special assistant for Homeland Security in lieu of Seman.

Taking over Deleon Guerrero's post in an acting capacity at DPS will be former Commonwealth Election Commission executive director and current Corrections Commissioner Robert Guerrero.

In turn, Corrections Capt. Jose Pangelinan will now serve as acting commissioner of Corrections.

In a short delegation of authority memo to the three agencies, Torres urged department employees "please accord your usual cooperation to [Deleon Guerrero, Guerrero, and Pangelinan] as [they] assume the duties of [their respective office and departments]."

Seman stepped down as HSEM chief last Dec. 7 for personal reasons after being instrumental in Typhoon Soudelor recovery efforts. He served as head of the agency ever since the merger of the Emergency Management Office and Department of Homeland Security.

Deleon Guerrero, meanwhile, succeeded former police chief Ramon Mafnas at DPS. Brothers Aniceto and Ambrose Ogumoro actually alternated as police chiefs in acting capacities before Deleon Guerrero's appointment.

Deleon Guerrero is known for spearheading the campaign against illegal drugs, vowing to rid the islands of the menace of methamphetamine or "ice," resulting in several high-profile arrests of suspected "drug lords."

Guerrero, for his part, succeeded Mafnas, who for a time wore both commissioner hats of DOC and DPS. As stated, Guerrero is a former executive director of the election commission.

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MELVIN

From Page 1

"What you did was really reprehensible," Manglona told the 42-year-old Ada. "You did not steal once but 54 times in the course of seven years in the amount of almost $2 million."

A tearful Ada was hugged by his crying mother, wife, children, and relatives after sentencing.

Ada was sentenced to 120 months imprisonment for 19 counts of theft or embezzlement in connection with health care, 120 months for nine counts of health care fraud, and 151 months for 28 counts of money laundering. The sentence shall run concurrently, meaning the defendant will serve a total of 151 months in prison—12 years and seven months.

After serving his sentence, Ada will be placed on three years of supervised release and required to perform 500 hours of community service.

Manglona ordered Ada to immediately pay $5,300 in court assessment fee.

The judge also granted the U.S. government's motion for money judgment in the amount of $1.8 million, representing the total gross proceeds Ada obtained as a result of his criminal conduct.

A separate hearing will be held on March 11, 2016, to determine the amount of restitution Ada must pay, as well as issues regarding whether or not Medicare or Medicaid are victims in this case.

Assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe said the U.S. government has no objection to CHCC being awarded restitution but opposes Midwest Medical Supply Co. LLD being considered a victim and/or receiving restitution in this case.

Attorney Colin Thompson, counsel for Ada, joined in the U.S. government's objection to Midwest Medical Supply's claim for restitution.

U.S. Probation officer Margarita Wonenberg stated that she reached out to Midwest Medical Supply about the case, and that the company submitted a victim affidavit.

Manglona said 54 checks were involved and that Ada specifically stole from the hospital, which is the only hospital in the CNMI.

Manglona said that large amount of checks were involved—the first was $10,000 and there was also $74,000.

Citing his own words, Manglona said that Ada was in a position of trust, tasked to take care of the wellbeing of patients at CHC.

"Somehow you knew how to manipulate the system," Manglona said, also citing Ada's poker, drinking, and smoking addictions.

Yet Manglona also pointed out that there was clearly a breach of protocol at CHC with respect to checks and balances.

In imposing the high level end of the sentencing guidelines range, Manglona said Ada's actions warrant harsh punishment.

She recommended that Ada take part in a financial responsibility program while in prison and any vocational education program to enhance his employment skills.

Manglona said Ada shall be given a mental health evaluation for addiction to gambling and substance and alcohol abuse, and to address anger management.

The remaining three counts in the indictment were dropped as part of the plea deal.

Before the sentence was handed down, Ada apologized for committing the crimes.

"I defrauded the hospital," said Ada, in tears. He said he used his position for his own benefit.

Ada apologized to his wife, Leyda, for all the embarrassment he caused to her "for something she did not do."

"I just want you to forgive me. I love you with all my heart," he said.

He asked their three children to continue working with their dreams and not follow his ways.

"I love you with all my heart," he told his children.

He apologized to his parents, siblings, and in-laws for the embarrassment he caused them. He also thanked his siblings for their forgiveness and support.

Ada said he has anger management problems and poker, smoking and drinking addictions.

Backe had recommended that Ada be sentenced to the high end of the sentencing guidelines or 151 months (12 years and seven months) imprisonment.

Backe said Ada, a then-public employee took advantage by stealing from the people of the CNMI not once but at least 54 times in the amount close to $2 million.

"Every time he stole, he lied," Backe said.

Ada spent the money on fancy cars, jewelry, designer bags, international trips, and opening businesses, he said.

Backe said Ada also lied to get food stamps, which is also a theft and fraud.

Backe said the most single most aggravating factor is the effect on people. He said dialysis patients had tremendous pain and tremendous recovery time—all caused by Ada. He said this reprehensible conduct warrants the high end of the sentencing guidelines.

In the U.S. government's sentencing memorandum, Backe said Ada was the "organizer, leader, manager, or supervisor" of the criminal activity he undertook with his wife and co-defendant, Leyda, from 2004 through 2011.

Taking advantage of his government job, Ada stole $1,941,491.25 that belonged to the people of the CNMI, he said.

Backe said Ada did not breach their trust just once or twice, but no less than 54 times over a seven-year period.

While Ada's theft is appalling in both its scope and scale, what truly makes it reprehensible is that it harmed actual people, Backe said.

He said Ada singlehandedly caused the hospital to stop receiving peritoneal dialysis supplies from MMS, which forced some patients to switch over to hemodialysis treatment.

Backe said according to Dr. Sherleen Osman during the investigation, "switching to hemodialysis was a significant burden on the patients, some wrote letters and some cried when they had to change treatment types."

Backe said former Public Health secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez, during interview by agents, noted that one of the patients came to him and "personally begged for the hospital to find peritoneal supplies so that she did not have to suffer through full dialysis."

Backe said after being fired from CHCC on July 5, 2011, Ada tried desperately to hide his crimes and the money he had stolen. He said Ada drained his bank accounts and transferred ownership of his vehicles to relatives.

Backe said Ada committed even more fraud by applying for (and receiving) food stamps and Medicaid within weeks of withdrawing or spending $75,000.

Backe asked the court to send a message that egregious government theft will be met with exacting punishment.

"It must put the fear in others who commit, or are planning to commit similar crimes, that they will suffer the same fate. And lastly, it must show the community that standing up in respect for the law ensures justice will be served against those that do not," he said.

Probation officer Margarita Wonenberg, who said that Ada's actions are reprehensible and very egregious, recommended the low end of the sentencing guidelines, which is 121 months imprisonment.

Attorney Colin Thompson, counsel for Ada, said it is time for Ada to pay for his crimes. He said Ada pleaded guilty to all but three counts and that Ada complied with the bail conditions in three years.

Thompson said seven and a half years—the lowest end of the sentencing guidelines—is sufficient but not greater than necessary, adding that seven years and a half years is a long time to serve in prison.

Ada pleaded guilty in October 2013 to 19 counts of theft or embezzlement in connection with health care, nine counts of health care fraud, and 28 counts of money laundering as part of a plea deal with the U.S. government.

His wife, Leyda Ada, was acquitted in June of charges of conspiracy to commit money laundering and money laundering. The jury, however, found her guilty of perjury. She has yet to be sentenced.

Melvin Ada was previously assigned as a medical supply specialist at CHC. Leyda Ada used to be a sales representative for Midwest Medical Supply Co. Inc., a Missouri-based company that had supplied dialysis consumables and equipment to CHC.

HOUSE

From Page 1

cate 75 percent of the proceeds from the tax to diabetes and obesity awareness program was defeated in a vote that straddled party lines.

Under the bill, introduced by Rep. Felicidad Ogumoro (R-Saipan), a tax rate of 4 cents per fluid ounce will be imposed on all sugar-sweetened beverages and all sugar-sweetened syrup and powder.

Ogumoro said she introduced the so-called "sugar tax bill" to help combat the high incidence of NCDs in the Commonwealth, particularly diabetes.

The bill now heads to the Senate for action.

Sugar taboo

The bill's findings cite recent studies of the obesity rate in the CNMI, which is 50 percent higher than obesity rates in the U.S. mainland.

Members of the Non-Communicable Disease Alliance came forward with written and oral testimonies in support of the bill.

According to Public Health-NCD Bureau administrator Becky Robles, "sugary drinks are American's single biggest source of added sugar, and are often marketed to children, but they offer little to no nutritional value."

She added, "Increasing the price of SSBs [sugar-sweetened beverages] will make the alternative—untaxed options such as water, 100 percent fruit juice, and unsweetened tea—more enticing to the largely price-conscious consumer population of the CNMI."

NCD Alliance chair Dr. Don K. Hardt said he sees first-hand the tragic consequences of obesity and diabetes, with 173 currently on dialysis in the Commonwealth.

He cited a smaller-scale study on imposing a tax on soft drinks that had positive results in Mexico, with sales of soft drinks decreasing 12 percent and sales of water rising after the bill became law.

Patricia Coleman, program leader of NMC-CREES Nutritional Health and Programs, said 30 percent of children in the CNMI are already overweight and obese and one of the main culprits is over-consumption of SSBs.

Among children, one additional serving of SSBs per day increases the chances of being obese by 60 percent, she said.

Coleman also made a brief demonstration of how much sugar is usually in the House members' favorite drinks.

Divvying the fund

During yesterday's deliberation on the bill, which took a lion's share of the protracted session from 1:30pm to nearly 6pm, House members debated how funds from the Special Healthcare Impact Account created by the tax would be appropriated.

Under the bill, the fund would be evenly split to pay off the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s outstanding debt with the Marianas Public Land Trust and programs to raise awareness on the pitfalls of obesity, specifically diabetes.

Yumul called for reducing CHCC's portion of the Special Healthcare Impact Account from 50 percent to 25 percent, but his amendment was defeated via party lines with the Republican majority siding with Ogumoro's appeal to keep the even 50-50 split.

Rep. Edwin Propst (Ind-Saipan) supported Yumul's amendment, saying that debt service should not supersede the original intent of the bill, which is to combat obesity and diabetes.

House Speaker Joseph P. Deleon (Ind-Saipan) said he initially supported giving more money to obesity and diabetes awareness programs, but changed his mind because giving money to help CHCC pay off its MPLT loan would ultimately help diabetes sufferers in the long run.

He said CHCC can better help its patients, including those with diabetes, if less of their annual budget is diverted into servicing the MPLT loan, which according to Ogumoro stills stands at $3.2 million. That translates to the hospital paying $21,000 a month to the trust.

Rep. Antonio Sablan (Ind-Saipan) also called for colleagues to help CHCC pay off its debt to MPLT by maintaining the 50-50 sharing of the Special Healthcare Impact Account.

DYNASTY

From Page 1

ty's casino floor remains closed.

She said Tinian Dynasty was prevented from reopening the casino because its owners, Hong Kong Entertainment (Overseas) Investments, Ltd., has yet to meet "conditions that were imposed by the TCGCC."

"They won't open until they complete the requirements. There are no new requirements and we're just following the previous commission-imposed conditions," Blanco-Maratita told *Saipan Tribune* in a telephone interview.

She reiterated that Tinian Dynasty wouldn't be allowed to reopen its casino until it fulfills all the requirements. She, however, said that the commission is always open for continuous dialogue with HKE.

"It would be up to them when they meet the requirements and if they want to set up a meeting, of course, my office is always open," Blanco-Maratita said.

The company's casino operations reopening were contingent on several wage, fee, and contract-related conditions. They include:

■ Payment of table and slot machine fees and outstanding taxes from last fiscal year, starting in August. The casino has paid the $250,00 annual casino license fee, she said.

■ The casino needs to pay unpaid employee salaries or submits a plan on how they will repay on these employees' back wages

■ The casino must assure that they will continue to contract services with Spectrum Gaming, a consultant, for casino management to help the casino maintain compliance

■ The casino has to make sure employee license or hotel registrations are up to date. Some of the employees have had provisional licenses, only good for a certain period. Blanco-Maratita said the licenses need to be renewed.

■ The casino must identify and disclose the source of funds for its reopening.

If it did reopen, however, Blanco-Maratita said Tinian Dynasty's casino will not be a 24-hour operation, as it will operate only from 11am to 3am the following morning, and close between those hours, except for Friday through Saturday, where they will be open for 24 hours.

Tinian Dynasty's casino was closed in August this year, followed by the hotel's closure in September, with the management citing the impact of Typhoon Soudelor, which hit Saipan on Aug. 3.

CUC

From Page 1

As of last week, the total damage to the site was determined, with the assessment of Department of Public Works for complete specifications needed for contractors to perform the road repairs, Ruszala said.

The repair is estimated to cost over $160,000, he said.

Ruszala said the 16-inch water main experienced increased water pressure in combination with the gravity flow system coming from their Kannat Tabla tank and the downward motion of the As Terlaje slope.

"As water builds up pressure, along with gravity and the downhill motion, it creates more pressure [within the main]," he said. Although CUC uses pressure reducing valves, whenever you have a slope, the water's PSI can more than triple, he said.

Currently, CUC is working on reinforcing, repairing and prioritizing its main tanks to relieve areas that experience intense pressure.

For the drivers traversing the area, take precautionary measures such as reducing uphill and downhill speeds through all lanes until repairs are made.

For more information, contact the CUC customer call center at 664-4282 or monitor their Facebook page for the latest updates.

Inos doing well; rest of family to join him in Seattle

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Gov. Eloy S. Inos will reunite with the rest of his family this Christmas when family members still on Saipan fly to Seattle to be with him this holiday season.

"The governor's fine and recovering. He has family already there staying with him and he also has family who are still here like Gerald and Kay. I know they will fly out and spend their Christmas there with him but I don't know for how long," said press secretary Ivan Blanco yesterday when asked for an update on Inos' health.

While he is still recovering from open-heart surgery in the U.S. mainland, Blanco said Inos remains updated about the affairs of the CNMI government, with acting governor Ralph DLG Torres communicating with him.

"He keeps in constant contact with the acting governor. Sometimes, when he's sleeping, it's his brother Rufin who talks to Torres."

As to the timetable of Inos' return to Saipan, Blanco said it's still up in the air.

"We were kind of speculating it would be December or January but it all depends on his doctors…He still has to do his physical therapy. You have to understand he underwent surgery and is still on dialysis. He's not 20-something years old…"

Inos underwent an "endoscopic" procedure on his heart in early November.

Several months ago, Inos underwent continuing examinations and medical treatments following his heart operation in the Philippines last summer, said a statement from Torres yesterday.

Inos suffers from diabetes. Prior to his surgery in Seattle, he underwent dialysis at the Commonwealth Health Center thrice a week. Last January, Inos was confined to the hospital due to symptoms of pneumonia. Months earlier in November 2014, Inos' health was a talking point during the 2014 general elections and subsequent runoff.

In November 2014, Inos disclosed that his medical leave to Manila that month was for a follow up to a bypass surgery he had in 2006.

Camacho denies motion to set aside man's conviction for attempted rape

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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho has determined that a Federated States of Micronesia citizen who was convicted in 2002 of attempted rape was given proper legal assistance, effectively denying the man's bid to have his conviction set aside.

Camacho disagreed with Seremea Issy Nowell's argument that he received ineffective legal assistance when then-assistant public defender Jeffrey A. Moots failed to advise him that he could possibly be deported if he pleaded guilty, or when Moots failed to negotiate a plea deal that had no immigration consequences.

In turning down Nowell's request to vacate his conviction, the judge said Moots' legal representation met the level that he was legally obligated to provide at the time, given the information available to him.

Camacho also ruled that the Superior Court is bound by duty to follow federal immigration laws despite Nowell's health concerns.

In his emergency petition, Nowell, through attorney Pamela Brown-Blackburn, asked the court to set aside his 2002 attempted rape conviction, citing that his then-counsel Moots failed to advise him that his guilty plea would make him deportable.

Moots, however, pointed out that the CNMI government did not initiate removal proceedings against Nowell during Brown-Blackburn's term as attorney general.

In his amicus curiae filing, Moots said during the six years he practiced in both the Office of the Public Defender and the Office of the Attorney General, he was not aware of any individual being deported based on that individual being convicted of a qualifying offense.

Moots said this is reinforced by the fact that Nowell's now counsel, Brown-Blackburn, did not initiate removal proceedings against Nowell when she was the AG—the government official responsible for overseeing the CNMI immigration enforcement activities.

Moots, who now based in Guam, filed the amicus curiae after Camacho invited him and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security-Immigration and Customs Enforcement to participate and be heard at the hearing of Nowell's petition.

Moots said while he also served as chief prosecutor for the CNMI and supervising the attorneys who litigated removal actions, the only individuals who faced removal proceedings did so for violating their work permit conditions.

Moots noted that in 2002 he had no way of knowing that seven years later, the CNMI would lose control over its immigration process and become subject to federal law.

Moots said the reality is that Nowell, if convicted of kidnapping, would have faced a mandatory life in prison. Therefore, he said, obtaining a plea with a maximum possible sentence of five years significantly reduced Nowell's sentencing exposure.

On Feb. 6, 2, 2002, Nowell pleaded guilty to attempted rape pursuant to a plea agreement with the government. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment, of which he served two years.

Nowell is now facing deportation after Immigration Judge Clarence M. Wagner Jr. issued a decision on Jan. 13, 2015, ordering him to be removed to the Federated States of Micronesia.

Nowell is originally from Chuuk in FSM. His home island is Mama, a weeklong boat ride from the main island of Weno.

Nowell has resided in the CNMI since the early 1990's and had adopted a U.S. citizen son, who is now 9 years old.

Last May, the 54-year-old Nowell, through Brown-Blackburn, filed in court the emergency petition to vacate his conviction, arguing that allowing the 2002 guilty plea without being advised of adverse immigration consequences is a violation of the NMI Constitution, the Sixth Amendment and the Commonwealth Rules of Criminal Procedure.

The immigration judge made his decision despite Nowell's medical concerns related to his advanced diabetes and hypertension, including challenges in obtaining medical treatment on his home island in FSM.

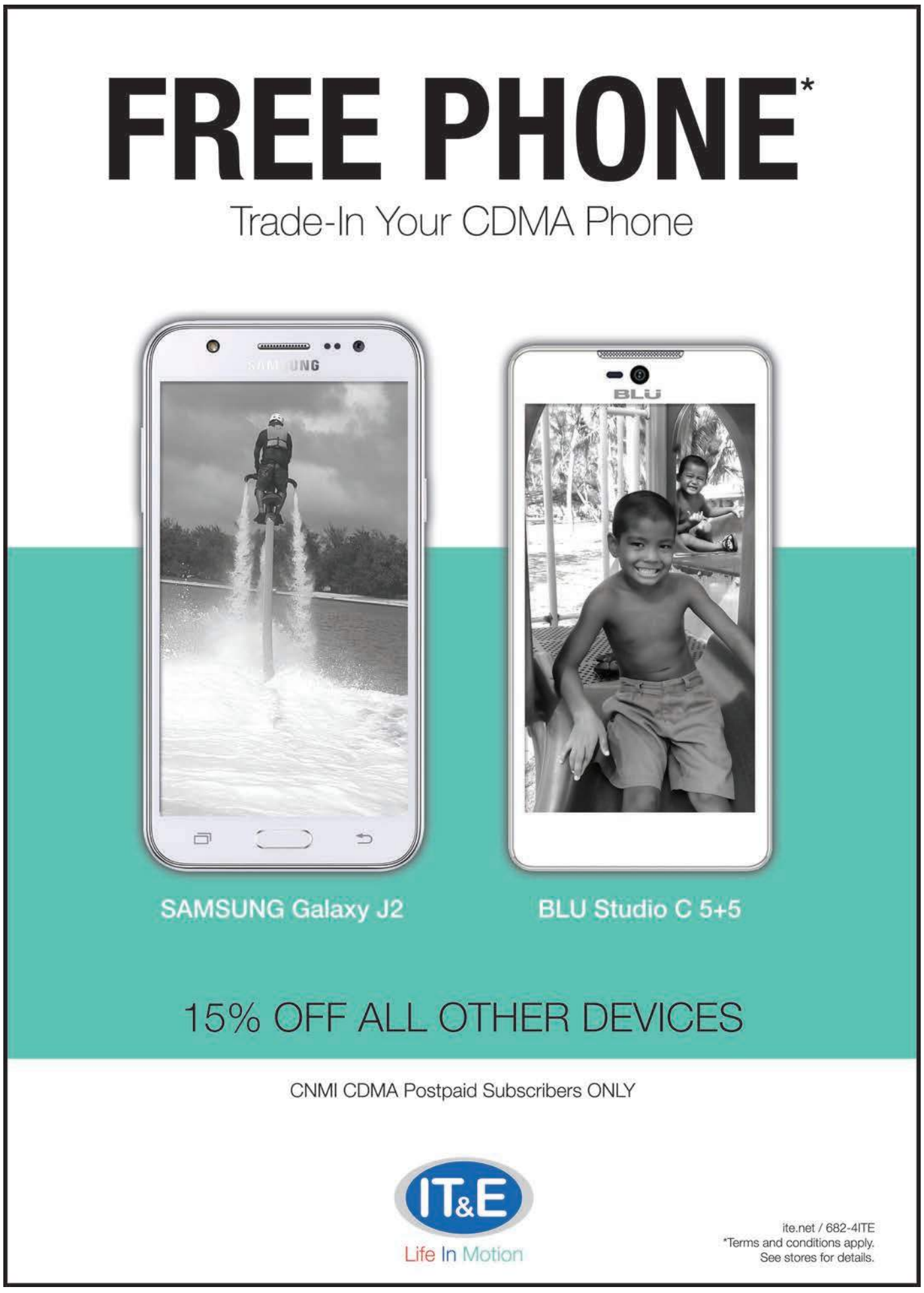
In his order, Camacho said although Moots did not advise Nowell of the immigration consequences of a guilty plea, there was no obligation to do so below an objective standard of reasonableness."

In the Padilla case, the U.S. high court ruled that counsel must inform the criminal defendant of the consequences of his plea under the federal immigration statutes because these were the statutes that controlled whether Padilla would remain in the U.S.

As Nowell has failed to show that Moots provided ineffective representation, the court need not reach the second Strickland prong requiring prejudice to the defendant.

In the Strickland's case, courts apply a two-prong test in determining if a defendant received ineffective assistance of counsel.

Under the second prong, "the defendant must show that that deficient performance prejudiced the defense."



Tinian has a lot to offer, says ACG CEO Sze

JON PEREZ

Alter City Group chief executive officer Edvon Sze, right, gestures as he talks with Commonwealth Development Authority executive director Manuel A. Sablan and economic development analyst Carline B. Sablan after submitting their Qualifying Certificate application last Tuesday at the CDA office in San Jose.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Alter City Group chief executive officer Edvon Sze believes in the huge growth potential of Tinian, which is why they've decided to invest in the CNMI.

ACG is planning to pump $1.2 billion in investments into the island, hoping to turn a 154-hectare lot at Puntan Diablo Cove in five years into a world-class hotel, casino, golf and resort.

"We're one of the major investors [on] Tinian and we see the potential of the island to become a tourist destination. Tinian has a lot to offer," Sze told Saipan Tribune.

He said they have taken into consideration a lot of issues on the island and sought a lot of consultants before making their decision.

"We discussed a lot of issues since this is a big project. We sought the opinion of consultants since the site where we plan to build, Puntan Diablo, is a beautiful place and we want to keep it that way," said Sze. "We asked various government departments involved in our project. We made sure that we meet all regulations and we're not violating any CNMI law."

Sze said one major hurdle that they need to get past is to make Tinian more accessible to local and foreign tourists alike.

"A lot of issues need to be discussed on how to make Tinian accessible. One way is a proposed aerobus transport system that would connect the island to Saipan," he added.

However, an extensive study must be made, Sze said, since concerns on the environment would rise with the planned aerobus transport system.

"The technology is accessible but a lot of issues will come up, like if the project would damage the environment. These need to be resolved fast before everything pushes through.

"Another issue that we need to resolve is if we are going to build on historical sites. Further consultation with the military is also needed so we won't interfere with lands that they occupy. It is just a matter of time and the cost of construction," he added.

Alter City Group is planning to build two hotel complexes, two casinos, six service apartment complexes, villas, a world-class 18-hole golf course and club house, a water park, a cultural center and a museum for its multibillion-dollar Plumeria Golf and Casino Resort.

Sze, ACG senior vice president for gaming and business development Albert Davia, and finance and accounting manager Ador Songcuan already filed their qualifying certificate application last Tuesday with the Commonwealth Development Authority.

CDA will review ACG's QC application in the next three months before making a recommendation to the Governor's Office whether to accept or reject the application. The application costs a $15,000 nonrefundable filing fee.

Man gets 30 days in prison for pointing airsoft gun at ex-wife

A man accused of punching his former wife and pointing an unloaded airsoft gun at her head has pleaded guilty and was slapped with a 30-day prison term.

At a change of plea hearing on Tuesday afternoon, Wei Zhang, 37, pleaded guilty to assault as part of a plea deal with the government.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo sentenced Zhang to six months in prison, all suspended except for 30 days, with credit for time served. He was allowed to start serving his remaining prison term at the Department of Corrections on Dec. 21, 2015, at 8am.

After completing the prison term, Zhang will be placed on probation for one year. He was ordered to report to the Community Guidance Center for anger management counseling.

Zhang was required to submit to an evaluation focusing on alcohol and drug assessment and treatment.

During his probation, Zhang is prohibited from possessing or consuming alcohol or controlled substances.

The Office of the Attorney General charged Zhang with assault and battery, assault, and disturbing the peace. He pleaded guilty to assault. In return, the government moved to dismiss the remaining charges. The court granted the motion.

According to the factual basis of the plea deal, on April 17, 2015, on Saipan, Zhang pointed an unloaded airsoft gun at the victim's head.

Police said officers responded to AJ's Fashion in Garapan after they received a domestic violence report. The storeowner met the officers and claimed that Zhang went inside the store and punched her in the head repeatedly. The defendant then pointed an airsoft gun at her head.

The victim said her former husband has been trying to control her life by bothering her at her store. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP16-OPA-025

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 07, 2016 **TIME: 10:00 AM**

"FINANCIAL AUDIT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS RETIREMENT FUND (NMIRF) AND GROUP HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE TRUST FUND (GHLITF), AS COMPONENT UNITS OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2015"

THE AUDIT GUIDELINES AND SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE PUBLIC AUDITOR'S MAIN OFFICE AT 1236 YAP DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M., MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, EXCEPT HOLIDAYS.

INQUIRIES MAY BE DIRECTED TO MR. DAVID BLAKE, AUDIT MANAGER, AT TELEPHONE NUMBERS (670) 322-6481/2 OR BY FACSIMILE TO (670) 322-7812.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

/S/ MICHAEL PAI, CPA
PUBLICA AUDITOR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP16-BEQ-028

SUBMISSION: JANUARY 13, 2016 **TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

"TO DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS, A PROJECT UNDER THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER **DECEMBER 10, 2015** AT THE BECQ OFFICE LOCATED AT THE GUALO RAI CENTER BUILDING, ON CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN OR ELECTRONICALLY BY EMAIL REQUEST TO ryanokano@becq.gov.mp DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A **PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING** IS SCHEDULED FOR **DECEMBER 29, 2015 AT 1:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME,** IN THE 2ND FLOOR BECQ CONFERENCE ROOM.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MAY BE SUBMITTED BY FACSIMILE TO MR. RYAN OKANO AT (670) 664-8540 OR BY EMAIL AT ryanokano@becq.gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE **CLOSE OF BUSINESS, JANUARY 04, 2016.** RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WILL ALL PROSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN A PROPOSAL IF IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NOTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
ADMINISTRATOR OF BECQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP16-BECQ-024

SUBMISSION: JANUARY 13, 2016 **TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

"UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK DATABASE DEVELOPMENT, A PROJECT UNDER THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER **DECEMBER 10, 2015** AT THE BECQ OFFICE LOCATED AT THE GUALO RAI CENTER BUILDING, ON CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN OR ELECTRONICALLY BY E-MAIL REQUEST TO derekchambers@becq.gov.mp DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR **DECEMBER 29, 2015 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME,** IN THE 2ND FLOOR BECQ CONFERENCE ROOM.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MAY BE SUBMITTED TO FACSIMILE TO MR. DEREK CHAMBERS AT (670) 664-8500 OR BY EMAIL AT derekchambers@becq.gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE **CLOSE OF BUSINESS, JANAURY 04, 2016.** RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN A PROPOSAL IF IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

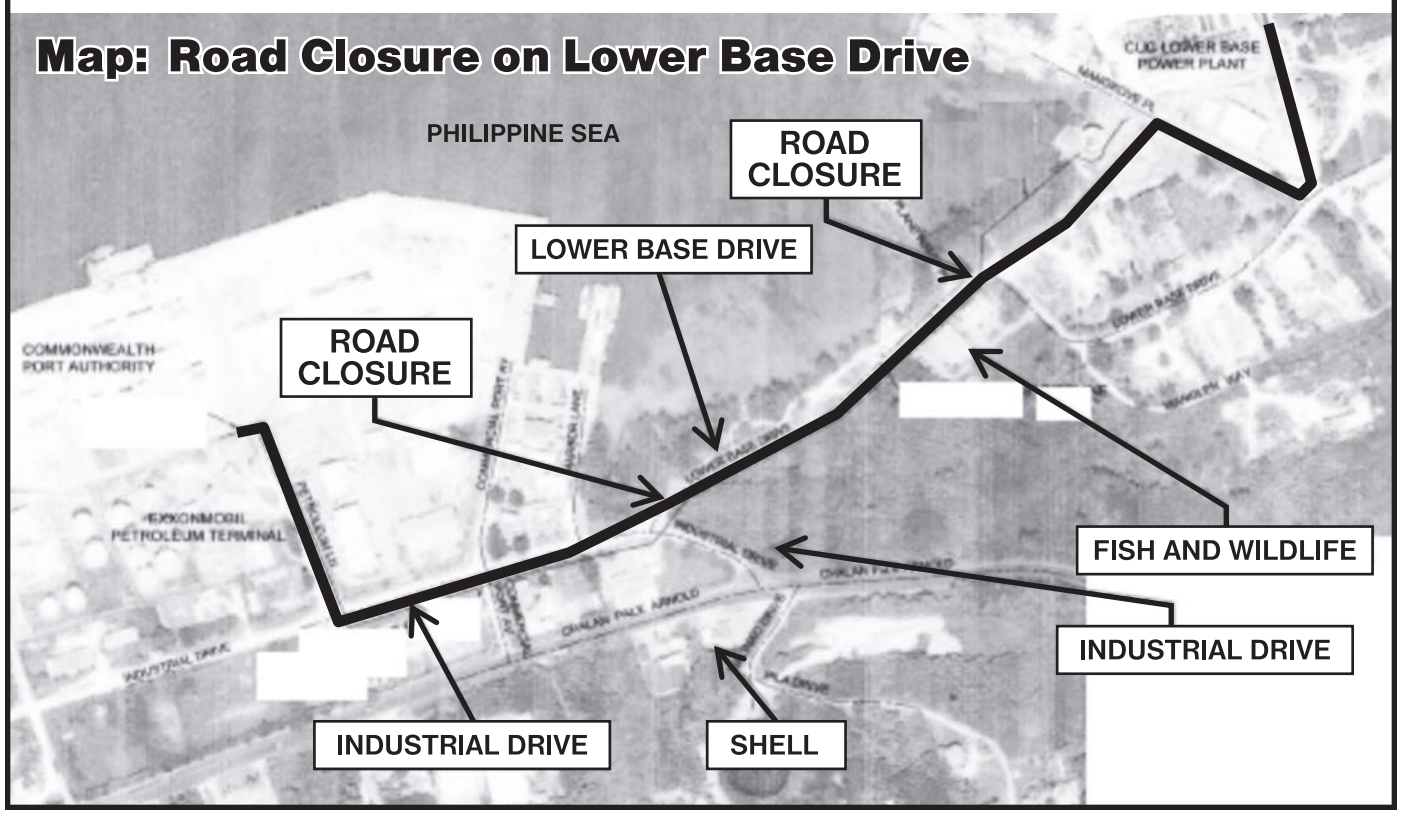
/S/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
ADMINISTRATOR OF BECQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

ROAD CLOSURE PUBLIC NOTICE

Lower Base Drive will be closed between Fish and Wildlife and the intersection of Lower Base Drive with Industrial Drive for pipeline installation from Saturday December 19 at 6 a.m. through Sunday December 20 at 10 p.m. See attached Map for areas of closure.

The work is being performed by Gilbane Federal. Contact Eric Yatabe at 670-898-2598 for any questions.



'GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN' JON PEREZ
Department of Public Safety personnel serenade the crowd with Christmas carols during Monday night's Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the parking lot of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe. The lighting ceremony has become an annual event that signals the official start of the Christmas season in the Marianas.

Commutation hearing set for man in death of infant

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Board of Parole will conduct a hearing whether to support or not the commutation of the 60-year sentence slapped against a man who was convicted in 2002 for the death of his 6-month-old goddaughter.

In a public notice, Board of Parole chair Ramon B. Camacho said the commutation hearing will be held on Dec. 22 at 9am at the Pedro Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Camacho said the board will consider whether to support or object to the commutation of Reynaldo A. Manila's sentence.

After the hearing, the board will vote whether to support or object to the issuance of a commutation of sentence by acting governor Ralph DLG. Torres.

Camacho said that people are welcome to make oral statements at the hearing. Those who want to submit written statements may drop their statements in person at the BOP office on Capital Hill before the start of the Dec. 22 hearing.

No other details were given for the hearing.

Saipan Tribune learned that Manila, who has been in prison since his arrest in 2000, is seriously ill.

Manila, a Filipino national, was 39 years old when then-Superior Court Associate Judge Virginia Sablan-Onerheim sentenced him in June 2002 to 60 years in prison for second-degree murder over the death of the infant. The baby's parents were also Filipino nationals.

According to Manila's lawyer, the defendant was babysitting the infant, who was his goddaughter, and that other than the defendant nobody was there when it happened. The counsel said no weapon was used, although there were testimonies about blunt force trauma and shaken baby syndrome.

Then-chief prosecutor Clyde Lemons noted that a physician testified that the baby had 11 bruises at the back of her head consistent with blunt force trauma or being hit with an object. Lemons said the doctor testified that the baby was shaken "very hard," consistent with shaken baby syndrome.

The baby lingered in the hospital for several days before dying on Nov. 6, 2000.

A jury found Manila guilty of second-degree murder and child abuse.

At the sentencing, Manila insisted he did not kill the infant. He has a child in the Philippines.

Free astronomy presentation at JKPL

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

To celebrate its 24th anniversary this week, the Joeten Kiyu Public Library will be having a free astronomy presentation this Friday with Keith Murdock, a visiting board member of the Rockland Astronomy Club of New York.

Murdock's presentation, "The Birth and Death of the Solar System," will take place in the library's Pacific Room at 4:30pm.

Murdock's lecture is for you if you would like to know how the solar system was formed, what chaotic events shaped the history of Earth and other planets, if the Earth gave birth to the moon, the reasons for the four seasons, the origins of the sun, and the ultimate fate of the Earth.

Murdock is a software engineer and medical device test engineer. He got hooked on amateur astronomy while viewing the comet Hyakutake in 1996. He is currently the lecture series coordinator for the Rockland Astronomy Club and frequently lectures on visual astronomy and planetary science. Murdock is also an avid fan of astro-tourism, using large telescopes to observe the planets from high elevations such Mt. Wilson in California and Mauna Kea in Hawaii. In 2005, he was able to locate Planet 10, an object in space that is orbiting the Sun in the Kuiper Belt far beyond Pluto.

If that doesn't get you pumped up and fitness is more your thing, the library is featuring a Free Fitness Half-Hour this afternoon from 5:15pm to 5:45pm. Interested participants are encouraged to wear comfortable workout clothing, proper shoes, and to bring a small towel and bottled water.

Since the library's inception in 1991, patrons have used the library for a variety of reasons including checking email, surfing the Internet, job hunting, basic computer classes, live homework help, after-school programs, earning volunteer hours and paid work experience, learning English as a second language, learning to play the ukulele, attending a club or professional meeting, enjoying a free movie, seminar, or public hearing, or just finding a good book and much more. So come on down and support your local library on its 24th birthday.

For more information on any of these activities, call 235-7322/16/29.

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IT&E installs new 4G site in Kagman

IT&E announced yesterday that a new 4G cellular site is now operational and carrying voice, text and data in the Kagman village, specifically in the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort area. Customers will notice improved coverage throughout Kagman with this new installation.

"We have been working hard these past few months to bring 4G service to the community in areas where it is lacking. Kagman village in particular needed improved signal and an additional site was warranted. Residents of Kagman can now expect strong signal and high-speed data on their devices," said John Compton, IT&E chief operating officer. "We are also working on an additional site in San Vicente in the Nan Ocha area, and one [on] Rota. We expect substantial progress on these two projects within the next few months. Just as soon as each of these sites are ready for our customers, we will notify the public." ***(IT&E)***

WANTED

NEWS REPORTER

The *Saipan Tribune* is looking for a FULL-TIME news reporter.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Above average writing skills and can work within deadlines;
- Fast learner, self-starter, and a team player;
- Computer literate;
- With photography skills;
- Must have reliable means of transportation.

If you have what it takes to be part of a dynamic team, email your résumé and samples of your work to editor@saipantribune.com. You may also drop it off at the *Saipan Tribune* office on the second floor of the JP Center Building on Beach Road, Garapan. ON-ISLAND HIRES PREFERRED.

Saipan Tribune, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer.
Qualified women, minorities, and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

PDM Promoters haul 1,060 lbs of garbage

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
PDM Promoters came together on Saturday to remove litter and debris along Paseo de Marianas and Coral Tree Avenue, collecting over 1,000 lbs of trash.

PDM Promoters Inc. continued their unrelenting dedication to beautifying Saipan's central tourist district last Saturday by collecting 1,060 lbs of garbage.

Eight employees of Kinpachi Restaurant and 16 members of the Saipan Awaodori Team came together to remove the brush and debris along Paseo de Marianas and Coral Tree Avenue. The non-profit group's coordinator, Sonia Siwa, shared that the trash collected were composed mostly of beer bottles, cigarette butts, Styrofoam cups, plates and aluminum cans.

The group's monthly cleanup normally collects close to or more than 1,000 lbs of trash. Last month, the group collected 860 lbs of trash. ***(Daisy Demapan)***

Tinian company gets suspended $1,000 fine

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tinian Trading International Inc. was fined $1,000 for failing to abide by Department of Labor employment regulations but the fine was suspended for a year provided that the company complies with all labor rules during the one-year period.

Labor's Enforcement Section imposed the penalty based on evidence that the employer, through its manpower services manager, Principia Monkeya, failed to meet its legal obligation to post employer declarations or job responses required under Labor's employment rules and regulation.

Labor hearing officer Jerry Cody suspended the fine for one full year provided that Monkeya complies with all local employment regulations.

Monkeya was warned of the company's legal obligation via a notice of violation filed by Tinian Labor Enforcement on Nov. 24. The legal obligation requires the employer to file a declaration or response for each U.S. status qualified job applicant who expresses an interest when applying on the Marianas labor website but is not hired. In order to fulfill the labor requirement of the declaration, the employer has to provide at least a short response on the website explaining the action taken when considering each applicant and the reasons why an applicant is not chosen for hire.

Principia testified during the hearing that she was the sole employee of Tinian Trading International Inc., which provides manpower services to Hong Kong Entertainment Overseas Investments or HKE, which owns the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

Monkeya noted that she began work with the company in July of this year and did not have prior knowledge of employer operations and management when she was hired.

In December 2014 to January 2015, the company posted nine job vacancies in an attempt to fill positions at the Tinian Dynasty. After the JVA's were posted, U.S. applicants who expressed their interest in the JVA's were not given any response.

Monkeya states that she is unaware as to whether her employer ever contacted the interested job applicants but was aware that no one was hired for the jobs listed on the website.

Cody acknowledged that the company's hiring effort was put on hold due to federal investigations into the Dynasty's labor and accounting practices.

Before the hearing, the original sanction was a fine of $18,000 or $2000 per JVA posted but Cody said that a suspended sanction was more appropriate in this case than a monetary fine.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PAROLE
P.O. BOX 502641, Saipan, MP 96950-2641
Tel: Nos.: (670) 664-3300 – 3302 • FAX: (670) 664-3310
E-mail: govbop@pticom.com

Commutation Agenda
Tuesday, December 22, 2015 at 9:00am
Multi-Purpose Center Building
Susupe, Saipan

1. **Preliminary Matters**
   1. **Call to Order**
   2. **Roll Call**
   3. **Presence of Quorum**
2. **Consent Items**
   1. Adoption of Agenda
3. **Pardon Hearing** — **Criminal Case No.**
   1. Reynaldo A. Manila — 00-0509CR
4. **Miscellaneous**
   1. **Other Matters**
5. **Adjournment**

The Board of Parole will be considering whether to support or object to a commutation for Reynaldo A. Manila. After hearing public testimony and discussing the matter, the Board will vote on whether to support or object to the issuance of a commutation by Acting Governor Ralph DLG. Torres.

Because of the anticipated large number of attendees at this hearing, not all attendees who wish to make oral statements may be able to do so. However, any person wishing to submit a written statement to the Board for its consideration may do so by dropping it off in person at the Board of Parole Office on Capitol Hill before to the start of the hearing on Tuesday, December 22, 2015 at 9:00 am.

If you have any questions, please call the Parole Office at (670) 664-3300 or 3302.

/s/ Ramon B. Camacho, Chairman — December 16, 2015, Date

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Dickens' classic Christmas tale this weekend

By MACKENZIE PEREZ
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In keeping with their tradition of putting up Christmas-themed theatrical productions this time of the year, the Friends of the Arts will bring back to life Charles Dickens' timeless classic, *A Christmas Carol*.

Show dates will be on Saturday, Dec. 19, at 7pm and on Sunday, Dec. 20, at 3pm and 7pm at the MHS Dolphin Theater. Ticket prices are $4 for students, $6 for FOA members, and $8 for adults.

FOA, along with Rhythm 'N Harmony and the Marianas High School Theater Club, will retell the story of the grouchy Ebenezer Scrooge's unusual journey of reviving his Christmas spirit.

Harold Easton plays the stingy Mr. Scrooge while Dave Butcher will take on the role of the ghost of Ebenezer's deceased business partner, Jacob Marley. Eden Connor, Vivian Viernes, and Ezra Connor will go on stage as the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet To Come, respectively.

Lance Deleon Guerrero will be playing Fred, Mr. Scrooge's nephew and only living relative, while Kaisa Anderson will be in the role of Mrs. Cratchit. Marylou Connor will be the narrator.

Easton is directing the play, with Paul Dujua handling the musical side of the production.

Open auditions for *A Christmas Carol* began in the first week of November. Students from Marianas High School, Mt. Carmel School, and Saipan Southern High School, as well as FOA members, auditioned for the production.

Friends of the Arts staged its first ever Christmas-themed play, *A Christmas Carol,* in 2006. Since then, FOA, Rhythm 'N' Harmony, and the MHS Theater Club have been joining forces to stage holiday-themed productions each time the Christmas comes around.

Contact Frank Gibson at 287-7476 for reservations and more information.

FSM gets $9.9M Compact payments

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In October and November of 2015, the Federated States of Micronesia's Department of Treasury and Administration received grant assistance payments from the U.S. government totaling $9.9 million. These payments, provided under the Compact of Free Association agreement, included financial assistance for sectors identified as priorities under the Compact such as health, education, infrastructure, public sector capacity building (all otherwise known as Compact Sector Grants), as well as Supplementary Education Grants.

Included in the Public Sector Capacity Building grant are funds that continue support for the Institutional and Capital Recovery Plan for the Chuuk Public Utilities Corp. The Joint Economic Management Committee, which votes on Compact assistance, has allocated funding since 2011 in support of the CPUC recovery plan, resulting in Chuuk having increasingly reliable power among all four states in the FSM.

The Public Sector Capacity Building grant has also enabled the CPUC to rehabilitate the Chuuk water system, an improvement that will support a new power plant in Tonoas. As reported in their November newsletter, CPUC officials met recently with landowners, municipal officials, and other interested parties in Tonoas to discuss rehabilitation of the water system. The project, funded through a $750,000 grant, will support the Tonoas community, the soon to be completed power plant, and the coconut processing plant project, all of which are expected to be built in 2016.

The CPUC has also instituted a "scratchcard" system for a cash-purchase power system in Tonoas through a $140,000 Public Sector Capacity Building grant. Customers in Tonoas using the "scratchcard" prepayment metering system, will also be able to purchase power from retail stores around the island once the power plant is complete.

Finally, the CPUC reports that the Sewer Treatment Plan Rehabilitation project, funded through prior year Public Sector Capacity Building funding, should be completed in early 2016.

The breakdown for Compact Grants in October and November 2015 follow:

- Education: $ 3,771,000
- Health: $ 3,138,000
- Infrastructure: $ 1,211,158
- Supplementary Education Grant: $660,000
- Public Sector Capacity Building: $485,450
- Environment: $263,000
- Enhanced Reporting and Accountability: $216,000
- Private Sector Development: $169,000

The amounts listed above are distributed among each FSM state:

- Chuuk: $4,269,866
- Kosrae: $1,150,999
- Pohnpei: $2,677,533
- Yap: $1,815,210

The Compact provides approximately 90 percent of the FSM's annual budget for health, education, and infrastructure development and maintenance.

The close relationship between the U.S. government and the Federated States of Micronesia is enshrined in the Compact of Free Association, under which the United States also provides guaranteed financial assistance over a 20-year period in exchange for full international defense authority and responsibilities. U.S. assistance through direct annual Compact grants will be replaced in 2023 by distributions from the Trust Fund for the people of the Federated States of Micronesia, as established under the amended Compact of Free Association. ***(OIA)***

IT&E
Life In Motion

IT&E needs the following positions for the Customer Operations department:

- Universal Service Representative
- Customer Care Assistant
- Systems Specialist

JVA# 1-2015-12: Universal Service Representative

The Universal Service Representative serves as the first line of contact with IT&E customers, receiving and initiating residential, business, government, Internet, and cellular customer contacts by telephone, personal contact and correspondence.

Minimum qualifications:
- High School Graduate with evidence of computer technical education or training;
- Two years of work experience in a customer service oriented business environment

Candidates Must Have:
- computer and customer service experience;
- excellent telephone etiquette and English communication skills;
- logical thought process;
- friendly and outgoing personality;

JVA# 2-2015-12: Customer Care Assistant

The Customer Care Assistant is responsible for providing training, tracking of Operation Results, Entering Payroll, Attendance Monitoring, Employee performance, data entry and record keeping. The Assistant monitors the network to ensure that service levels are met, addresses any customer issues to meet customer expectations, and provides on-call technical support and contact for the Customer Operations escalations. The Assistant uses a combination of profiling, overtime, and shift changes to adjust staffing levels to accommodate revised staffing-need forecasts, marketing rollouts, network upgrades, and unexpected increase in call volumes due to natural or man-made events.

Minimum Qualifications Requirements:
- High School Graduate with evidence of computer technical education or training;
- One year of work experience in a customer service oriented business environment

Candidates must have:
- computer and customer service experience;
- excellent telephone etiquette and English communication skills;
- Data Entry and Record Keeping
- Business Writing
- logical thought process;
- friendly and outgoing personality;

JVA# 3-2015-12: Systems Specialist

The Systems Specialist is responsible for assisting with the maintenance, troubleshooting and installation of personal computers (PC), network, server and telecommunications equipment. The incumbent will apply solutions to resolve technical problems reported by customers and end users, both internal staff and Company clients, through the phone and direct interface.

Minimum Qualification Requirements:
- Associate's degree from an accredited college or university in computer science or related field, or a combination of completion of a technical certificate program and equivalent additional work experience
- Work Experience: Two years progressively responsible experience in computer help desk work

Candidates Must Have:
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

The Pentagon should not be adding new bases

The Pentagon's latest dream is a larger string of military bases around the world, in principle to be able to contain the Islamic State group and other terrorist threats.

In addition to U.S. bases already in Afghanistan, Australia, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Cuba, Djibouti, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates and elsewhere, the United States wants to build others in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The idea would be to cast a worldwide American military net to mount Special Operations missions and gather intelligence on terrorists wherever they exist.

The new bases, to be established in Burkina Faso (which just reversed an attempted military takeover), Cameroon, Ethiopia, Niger, Spain and Iraqi Kurdistan, would each include forces from 500 to 5,000. According to Pentagon officials, the new "hubs" wouldn't cost much, although money for "base improvements" would be part of the tab. What that means is, start small, build a 7,500-foot runway, add aircraft, add a drone base, build quarters to house troops and proceed from there.

The ambitious Pentagon proposal has been sent to President Barack Obama and awaits his approval.

Unfortunately, it is consistent with a view of the world that says the world's conflicts should be addressed by the United States, not regional or national bodies. That approach is inconsistent not only with America's financial predicament, but also the lack of logic in the United States taking on everything everywhere.

Obama should kill this proposal for military expansion and force the Pentagon to accept the budget cuts that the rest of the government is imposing on itself and to scale back its activities globally.

(c) 2015 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

THOUSANDS OF MUSLIMS IN NEW JERSEY CHEERED AS THE BUILDINGS WERE COMING DOWN ON 9/11.
THE FEDS ARE SENDING REFUGEES TO STATES WITH GOVERNORS WHO ARE REPUBLICANS NOT DEMOCRATS.
THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT SENDS THE BAD ONES OVER.
BLACKS KILL 81 PERCENT OF WHITE HOMICIDE VICTIMS.
DUFFY

Obama's weak leadership boosts Trump

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. *Readers may write to her at:* Philadelphia Inquirer, *P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at trubin@phillynews.com.*

One reason Donald Trump can profit from his rabid fearmongering is because there's no one out there to calm the nation down.

According to a new New York Times/CBS News poll, Americans are more fearful about the likelihood of another terrorist attack than at any time since right after 9/11. A plurality of the public views the terrorist threat as the top issue facing the country.

Americans need a leader they trust who can assure them that everything possible is being done to secure the country. Obviously, that leader should be President Obama, who meant to provide such assurances in his Oval Office address to the nation right after the San Bernardino shootings.

He did not succeed. That failure helps explain why a climate of panic is fueling the most ugly election season in decades.

According to the New York Times poll, 57 percent of Americans disapprove of Obama's handling of terrorism and the threat from Islamic State, while seven in 10 say the fight against Islamic State is going badly. In other words, a rare Oval Office speech did little to calm America's angst.

But here's an important news bulletin: Americans don't see Donald Trump as their savior, either. Despite Trump's rising support among Republican primary voters, the Times poll shows that 64 percent of the broader electorate would be concerned or scared about what he would do as president.

This confirms my belief that most Americans have not lost their minds.

However, Obama's inability to assuage the public's legitimate fears creates continued openings for demagoguery in a vicious campaign season. His failure goes beyond the serious weakness in his policies for combating Islamic State.

After all, Trump has no policy except to "bomb the s--- out of them (Islamic State)." Nor have his GOP rivals come up with much better (Ted Cruz's answer is to "carpet-bomb them into oblivion").

What's needed now is a leader with the FDR touch, who can reassure Americans of their strengths and of his commitment to the fight, while pulling no punches. That reassurance was sadly lacking in the Oval Office speech. Obama chose to stand professorially behind a lectern—displaying his famous cool, lawyerly demeanor—rather than emulate the warmth of Roosevelt's "fireside" radio chats.

Of course, a big part of Obama's problem is that he is selling an incoherent plan. His speech merely tweaked a flailing Mideast policy and called for the public to be patient. "Our success won't depend on tough talk," the president said.

But he never explained why coalition air strikes in Syria and Iraq would work now, when they have proved inadequate so far; there is still no effective Sunni Arab fighting force on the ground to call in targets or take advantage of U.S. air power. Nor did Obama explain how sending 50, or 150, more U.S. Special Forces can remedy the lack of Sunni ground troops. (America's Kurdish allies cannot and will not vanquish Islamic State on their own.)

Moreover, the president still rejects any criticism of his refusal to help Syrian moderate fighting groups in 2012 (when they existed) or to arm Iraqi Sunni tribesmen eager to fight Islamic State. This creates a gaping hole in his policy that the public grasps.

Instead, Obama and his team are betting that Vladimir Putin will endorse a U.N. peace plan, which ends the fighting in Syria, dumps President Bashar al-Assad, and unites the West, Russia, and the Syrian army to fight Islamic State. To put it kindly, this is a mirage.

So yes, the president's failed policies stoke public anxieties. Americans don't want to send tens of thousands of troops back to the Mideast (nor would a GOP president do so), but they do want a leader who seems to know what he is doing.

Yet I still believe that the source of America's angst goes deeper than Obama's foreign policy mistakes.

At a time of pervasive change, in both the economic and global realms, people want a leader who can convince them they'll be safe. Right now, many Americans can't identify that leader.

GOP candidates hardly fill the bill; Trump's opponents have been whipping up some of the same hysteria over refugees and Syria with only slightly less fevered language. Hilary Clinton's foreign policy speech in Washington last week had a strong, compassionate tone, but she is just laying out her foreign policy program. Bernie Sanders grasps the climate of public outrage but is no foreign policy wonk.

And Obama lacks the empathy to reassure the public (qualities that I believe would ameliorate some of the unease over his policies).

Feeling leaderless and rudderless, even some Americans who would normally reject a demagogue may succumb to the appeal of a strongman. As I have written before, I don't think the Donald will make it to the White House. But I fear this election season will get even uglier—especially if domestic Islamic State wannabes exacerbate the confusion at home.

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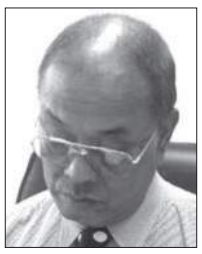
Industrian casino



By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.

Yangin para un` aronsa makat na kosas seguru-yu` siempre na un` rikonose kau fitme na pisu `nai para un` tohge. Gigon fina` luñu` pues tai bali todu animu-mu. Sulun ke sulun estake un` dagau ñaihon i tuaya! Mauleg yangin ti iridau hau.

Namanman sa` i man-sabiun I Deni` man-hasulun. Dehemunos kau man-basnag gi che`chu` linahyan kumu makomple pinetsigen niha maseha umakontra seriosamiente yan dinisehan i tautau.

Ti hu kokontra casino kinibrutu. Lau guaha mas mandañkuloña na casino giya America man-mahuchom. Era i fondu ni ma-ekspepekta ti mumaterialisa. Uttimoña manma-ayuda fondun publiku pot empleau niha.

Dispues i Indian siha giya America ni mangai casino ti komprendiyon pinadesen niniha. Un` manadan mamopble. Masupopone na areglun casino maseñala kumu sahyan para unna` fan popble i los prohimos kosake u fan osgun dispues.

Taiguine para umasusede guine lokue`. I fondu humanau guatu gi casino. Ya hafa i mas man-presisu siha na setbisiun publiku tat kumu edukasion, hinemu` yan otru siha setbisiu?

I presidenten iya China ha punu` i Triad yan VIP. Este i dos kumokone` i manriku ginen China propiu ya mana` fan hugagandu giya Macau. Magpu` este na chalan fondu ginen i manriku. Manu `nai para ta kone` manriku pa`gu? Taigue este gi kuentas niha i Best Sunshine.

Estague` tutuhon matompu` este na industria guine. Sige hit manmadage na todu mauleg. Kulan mohon tita tuñgu` man-manaitai para ta ebalua haf` siha man-masusede ni para unina` chafleg deste tutuhon kinalamten casino guine.

Diskuidu: Sumugu`yu` gi inai iya Papau, San Roque, para bai` e`fresko. Hu soda` un` amiguhu yan talayaña sige ha plaiteha kinalamten guihan siha. Mientras tantus sige ham kumombetsasion pot i señgsoñg iya San Roque.

Ha esplika machule` tanu` familian niha ya mapatten ñaihon gi inestablesen nuebu na soñgsoñg. Dañkulu yan guaguan na pidason tanu` manmachule`guan gi tiempon Navy. I na`pinite i sentaya` apas `sino fina` trokin tanu`.

Ha estotba konsensiaghu ayu na disision. Mapunu` linala` un` familia gi mafañagu na nesessidat sin haf` na konsiderasion. Hu soda` dispues otru hihot na finapos gi manmachule`guan ni tanu` niha. Man-mana`e dispues trekke lau ti fininas i gaige gi korason niha na debi mohon umanana`lu dispues de nesessidat i Navy.

I tanu`, piot propiadat familia, mina` dañkulu na atburotu sa` mañega direchon niha kumu dueñu gi uttimu disposision tanu` niha. Dañkulu na sentimientu uma`akalaye` gi estorian ennau na tanu` ni hagas mausa ni manmofo`na.

Debi este na aminasu yan chinatsaga umasatba ensegidas.

Sentimientu: Tihu tuñgu` taimanu para chule`hu ni finu` tautau siha gi fina` lisayu pot mattirun sapet gi familian niha. Estake mattuyu` giya hame `nai hu ebalulua hiniñgog-hu.

Didog na sapet guaha achog todu i dos umasagua machochochu`. Obligasion niha kinubre apas guma, insurance guma`, kareta yan hinemlu`. I tetehnan madibidi entalu` nesessidat guine yan patgon niha ni gaige kolehu.

Ayu mas didog pinadesen niniha i pa`gu umupos kualifikasion ayudun federat. I inadahe gaige gi eskaleran sientimus. Taya` kampu para usun otru attikulu maseha pot para u lipan ñaihon siha. Esta nina` fañichichi` ni mattirun chandan chatsaga na kinalamten.

Apas guma yan insurans kada sakan este na obligasion. Parehu yan insurans kareta yan hinemlu`. Gigon lotgun pues dañkulu na chinatsaga siempre umafana` ni familia. Haf` ya mantinetpe fina` gotpe tat kumu finatai pat seriosu na minalañgu? Makat na kontrariu i para u dudulalag kumegacha` i mapospone na apas obligasion.

Megai pumadedese este na tiempu. Mientras todu gastu mañgahulu` i sueddu sumaga kulan ma-simientu pot 14 años na tiempu. Sapet finañagu katkuet birada!

Kontodu ayu i rumesisibe ayudun neñkanu` sapet `nai mafafana` nesessidat famaguon niha ni man-eskuekuela. Ma-nesessita magagu, sapatos yan lepblu. Estague` na patte `nai man-ensinahyau ginagau ayudu gi membron familia. Makat!

Mauleg na monhayan esta i lahihu eskuelaña `sino fumila-yu` mangagau misirikotdia pot para bai la`la` gi halom mattiron sumen chafleg na ekonomia.

Futtuna-ta: Manmamatmos manadan tautau gi halom fache` miserapble na modun linala`. I kuestion: Haf` bidan niniha i mansabiun hegsu` I Deni` para uma-adelanta i sumen makat na sapet ni lumuluñu` manadan familia pa`gu?

Gi hilu` este na sapet mampos nachatsaga i apenas fondu gi kahan iya Marianas. Nuebu na tinituhon dispues de destrosiun pagyu. Guaha mohon kampu gi bandan adelanton kontribusion tax para nesessidat setbisiun publiku?

Matompu` ni atdet iya Marianas na biahe. Megaiña obligasion ke para u halom na rinikohen aduana (taxes). Man-apatten tiau entalu` CUC, CHC, PSS, retirement yan otru siha ahensia. Dibina ni sumen makat para mona! `An mafondu galaide`ta, pues tat ti u hinala papa` gi taduñg tasin dibi!

'Run, hide, fight' at school

By LISA LEWIS
LOS ANGELES TIMES

The day of the mass shooting in San Bernardino, Calif., my son's high school was placed on a short lockdown. He was remarkably nonchalant when I picked him up. "It was just a Level One," he said, brushing off my concerns. "Everything's fine now."

It wasn't, in fact; the horror was still unfolding and would come even closer to home that afternoon, when law enforcement found a veritable arsenal in the assailants' townhouse. But I recognized my son's need to normalize what had happened.

I listened attentively as he explained the difference in lockdown levels: A Level One is when an active shooter is in the town or city; a Level Two is when the shooter is in the neighborhood; and a Level Three is when the shooter is actually on campus.

During a Level One, my son explained, teachers lock their classroom doors and lower the blinds. Some continue with the day's lesson plans. Others choose to take the more extreme measures required during a Level Two or Three. They turn off the lights and instruct the kids to turn off their cellphones. They ask everyone to gather silently in the corner of the room farthest from the door and windows.

Once they're given the all-clear signal, teachers may take additional time away from instruction to discuss what just happened, knowing that it's hard for kids to snap right back to Latin or biology when they've just been contemplating a shooter on the loose.

I may be 33 years my son's senior, but in many ways he's more worldly. When I was in high school in the 1980s, the terms "active shooter," "lockdown" and "shelter in place" weren't buzzwords. "Active shooter" entered the lexicon not long after the Columbine massacre in 1999. "Lockdown" has been around longer, but until recently was most commonly used in prisons.

In the wake of the Sandy Hook attack, the Department of Education released guidelines for school emergency plans. Specific requirements vary by state. California's Education Code doesn't mandate "active shooter" exercises but does expect school districts to develop comprehensive safety procedures for each campus. Some schools around the country, eager to stay ahead of the curve, have taken it upon themselves to stage simulations complete with uniformed officers, fake blood and student actors. Sometimes schools announce drills in advance; sometimes not. The goal is to minimize the "freeze" response, which can prove fatal. Instead, participants learn to "Run, Hide, Fight."

I get it: Preparedness is key. But there are possible downsides to these morbid war games. For starters, we don't know how kids may respond to them in the long term. (There's little research on the subject.) And they scare the hell out of the community. An "active shooter" drill at an Irvine elementary school in August was realistic enough that surprised neighbors called the police. Responding officers were unaware of the drill.

Our schools are confronting the new normal through preparations that would once have seemed ridiculous. At my daughter's elementary school, the Parent Teacher Association voted to buy portable toilets and privacy curtains for kids to use during lockdowns. It was a prudent decision. After the school's last lockdown, my daughter told me that a fellow second-grader had to pee in a trash can, shielded by a flip chart the teacher set up to provide privacy.

Somehow, we've gotten to the point in California where, like earthquakes, school shootings are an acknowledged part of our kids' lives.

Each October, the state goes all out publicizing the Great California ShakeOut. The chirpy online "ShakeOut Shop" offers T-shirts, coffee mugs and buttons reminding Californians to "Drop, Cover and Hold On" in the event of an earthquake. Can a similarly upbeat "Bullet-Wise" preparedness day be far behind?

Teaching kids to "Run, Hide, Fight" reinforces the nihilistic view that mass shootings are inevitable, diverting energy from the struggle to stop them. Instead of crafting catchy phrases to help kids stay safe in the event of an atrocity, we should work toward stronger gun ownership background checks and assault-weapon restrictions. We need more than preparedness; we need prevention.

Lisa Lewis is a writer based in Redlands, Calif. She wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

What Trump's anti-Muslim campaign reveals

By JONATHAN BERNSTEIN
Bloomberg View

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg View columnist. Readers may send him email at jbernstein62@bloomberg.net.

Not only is Donald Trump's call for banning all Muslims from entering the U.S. being widely condemned. It is also a losing campaign strategy, even if it has given him a consistent polling lead so far.

Trump thrives on media attention. Yes, many inflammatory things he has said find some support among Republican voters. But a lot of pronouncements, whether outrageous or mainstream, could find some support—and lots of candidates are willing to make them. What moved Trump to the top of the polls and keeps him there is his utter dominance of the information environment. He's the only candidate most Republicans are hearing about.

Looking just at nightly network news, Trump has received about 33 times as much coverage as Ted Cruz has so far this year. Thus it's more surprising that Cruz is still relatively close in the polls than that Trump leads in them.

Poll respondents rarely choose a candidate they've never heard of or have heard little about. So for most Republican voters, the choice they've been asked to make is more a referendum on Trump than a choice among several Republican contenders.

The challenge for Trump is that he's in a Red Queen race: As time goes on, he has to do more and more to get the same amount of attention.

Back in the summer, when most Republican presidential candidates were occupied by the "invisible primary" competition for the support of major party actors, Trump's ability to dominate the media was relatively easy: Most candidates weren't focused on the public side of the campaign at that point.

When the debates began, this started to change. Trump typically lost a little steam after each of those events because they generated publicity for the other candidates. But he has proved skilled at moving the spotlight back to himself, quickly rebounding in the polls to about 30 percent or so in Republican trial heats.

As the primaries and caucuses draw nearer, the ground is shifting. It was no surprise that an Iowa poll is showing Trump falling behind. Voters there are being exposed to a more balanced flow of information. Other candidates are running TV ads, raising their profiles, and the campaigns are contacting people directly. Thus Trump has resorted to what the Spectator's Alex Massie called a "dead cat" ploy.

After the voting starts, the press will start to treat those candidates considered to have a chance as more or less equals. Even if Trump does well in Iowa and New Hampshire, he'll be only one among a small number of serious candidates. He may still get the most attention, but it won't be 33 to 1.

To keep the attention on him, his antics have to be wilder and wilder. Each time he goes over the top he risks losing some supporters, and solidifies the opposition of Republicans who were initially inclined to oppose him.

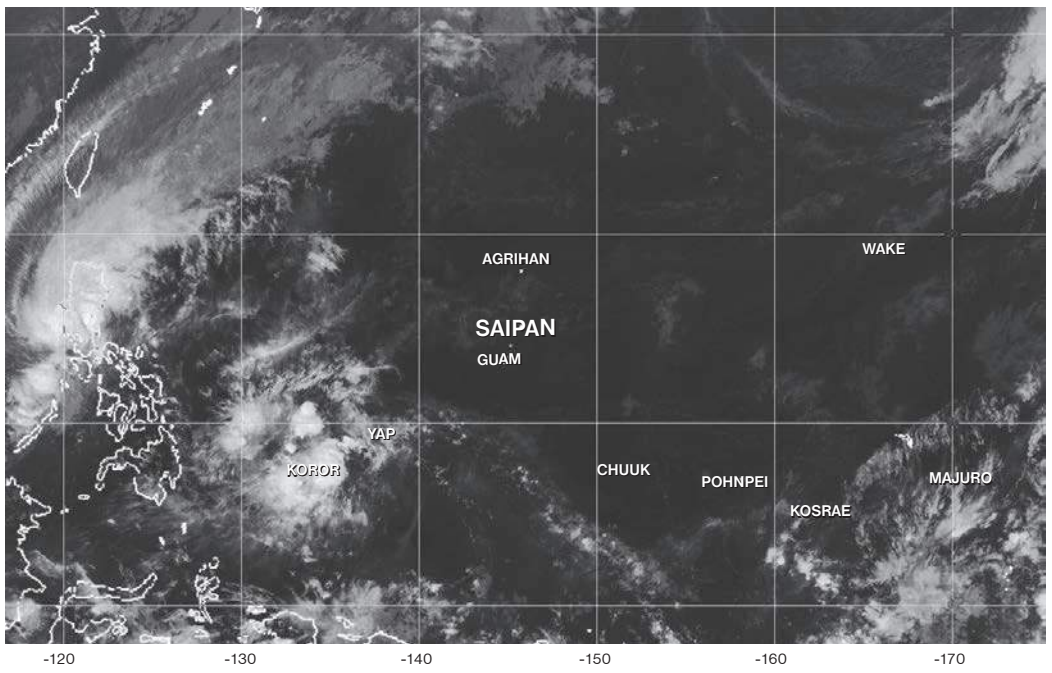
It's a perfect strategy to produce early polling leads. When it comes to winning nominations, however, it's a loser.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A tropical disturbance centered 150 miles east of Koror near 7.3N and 136.6E remains the subject of a Tropical Cyclone Formation Alert by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center but it is currently poorly organized with diminishing prospects for development. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring mainly north and west of the center. In the area bounded by 11N130E to 13N138E to 10N140E to 5N135E to 8N130E back to 11N130E including Koror and Yap. For more information on this disturbance, see the formation alert issued by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center under WMO header WTPN21 PGTW. Low-level convergence is generating scattered showers from east of Yap to south of Chuuk within 75 miles of a line from 11N141E to 9N146E to 4N150E to 1N155E. Convergent northeast trade winds are producing widespread cloudiness along with isolated showers and thunderstorms across eastern Micronesia from near Kosrae across the Marshall Islands and portions of Kiribati south of a line from 5N160E to 8N171E to 8N180. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers well northeast of Majuro between 11N and 16N from 174E to the date line. A cold front is producing scattered showers and thunderstorms northeast of Wake Island north of a line from 22N170E to 25N179E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼78
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼79
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲65	▼52
Beijing	Sunny	▲37	▼20
Hong Kong	Windy	▲59	▼51
Honolulu	Sunny	▲83	▼72
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲59	▼51
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲63	▼43
Manila	Rain	▲81	▼73
Melbourne	Sunny	▲99	▼69
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼74
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲52	▼48
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼37
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲59	▼52
Pusan	Sunny	▲42	▼27
Rome	Sunny	▲60	▼40
Salem	Cloudy	▲47	▼43
San Francisco	Sunny	▲57	▼46
Seoul	Sunny	▲33	▼22
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲50	▼38
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲58	▼44

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- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:30 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.1 Feet
12:32 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
6:50 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
11:29 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Sunday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Monday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:07 AM	11:15 PM
Friday	11:53 AM	
Saturday	12:40 PM	12:11 AM
Sunday	1:26 PM	1:08 AM
Monday	2:14 PM	2:06 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5072/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2924/159	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

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MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Learn hotel, hospitality skills in a shorter period of time

» LTA, Commerce team up for focused skill certification

The Latte Training Academy, Inc., through a subgrant from the CNMMI Department of Commerce, is currently accepting registration for eligible CNMI residents to avail of focused trainings and certification in the hotel and hospitality industry.

Made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, the program offers specialized trainings toward certification as a front desk representative, guestroom attendant, restaurant server or maintenance worker. All certifications are conferred by the prestigious American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute, which are recognized globally throughout the hotel and hospitality industry.

The focused trainings are newly launched through the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute and are aimed at providing participants with specific skill development within the highest demand areas in the hotel and hospitality industry.

"The emphasis of the focused training sessions is premised on helping participants rapidly develop skills and knowledge in the areas which present the highest employability potential within the industry. This allows them to rapidly join our prized tourism workforce in a much shorter time frame, with a globally recognized certification within that specific employment area," said Latte Training Academy secretary Tina Palacios.

Commerce Secretary Mark Rabauliman welcomed the change in approach for the training program.

"During the first launch of the program, the Latte Training Academy began with the maximum number of participants allowed by the grant. However, throughout the course of the program, they experienced significant attrition due to the length of the program. The full START program, which provides an overall certification in multiple areas of the hotel and hospitality industry, is 180 hours. This was a lot of hours for students to maintain for the duration of the program. Despite issues with attrition, the program certified nine students through the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute, many of whom are currently employed in the industry. The change in approach limits the areas that participants will be able to certify in; however, the trainings are more focused limiting the maximum time to 50 hours. This should provide for a higher retention and completion rate for participants," said Rabauliman.

The courses will begin in February and are scheduled for 20 hours of classroom work, with the approximately 30 hours in the field with partner hotels. Each course will be able to accommodate a maximum of 12 students per sessions with the most in-demand sessions to begin first.

The organization is currently accepting registration for the curses. Interested participants can learn more by visiting www.lattetrainingacademy.com or by calling toll free 1-855-544-8500. ***(LTA)***

OES students show school pride in forensic competition

Congratulations to Oleai Elementary School students for their achievement in the December Primary Grade Forensic Conference! Go, Turtles!

Chester Torres
- 1st place, Readers Forum

Lars Wolf
- 1st Place, Humorous Interpretation

Issa Teigita
- 1st Place, Impromptu
- 2nd Place, CCLHS

Krislaine Cabanas
- 2nd Place, Readers Forum Masters

Keith Ebuem
- 2nd Place, Readers Forum

Psa Lle Medina
- 2nd Place, Readers Forum Masters

Mikha Apolonio
- 2nd Place, Readers Forum

Ethan Federezo
- 3rd Place, Readers Forum

Deejay Santomin
- 3rd Place, Humorous Interpretation
- 4th Place, Readers Forum Masters

Evon Mallari
- 3rd Place, Readers Forum Masters

Tinalyn Litulumar
- 3rd Place, CCLHS

Oceana Teigita
- 3rd Place, Impromptu
- 1st Place, CCLHS

Nicole Mallari
- 3rd Place, Readers Forum Masters

Aurvy Jacolbe
- 4th Place, Readers Forum

Dohyu Kim & Seohyun Kim
- 4th Place, Duo Interpretation

Amanda Cervantes
- 5th Place, Readers Forum

Patrick Gregorio
- 5th Place, Impromptu

Psa Lme Medina
- 5th Place, Readers Forum

DMS students shine in speech competition

Dandan Middle School would like to congratulate the following Tottots for a job well done during the National Junior Speech and Debate November competition:

Jonathan Wolf
- 1st Place, Humorous Interpretation
- 1st Place, Prose Reading Masters

Bina Mary Reyes
- 1st Place, Poetry Reading Masters
- 1st Place, Carolinian Prose
- 5th Place, Story Telling

Holly Liban
- 2nd Place, Impromptu
- 2nd Place, Dramatic Interpretation

Rio Ayu Shadow
- 2nd Place, Impromptu
- 2nd Place, Original Oratory

Joseph Zhang
- 2nd Place, Story Telling
- 2nd Place, Prose Reading

Grace Zhang
- 3rd Place, Impromptu
- 3rd Place, Original Oratory

Jenny Yang
- 5th Place, Duo Interpretation
- 5th Place, Prose Reading

Haram Kim
- 5th Place, Duo Interpretation

ESFDB students showcase the Nativity story

Students of Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja performed and reenacted the Nativity story for the Luta community on Dec. 5 as part of the Christmas lighting event held at the Melchor Mendiola Leadership Park.

Students from pre-school to eighth grade showcased their creative talents in a series of music, dance, and strings performances.

The entire student body dressed as shepherds, angels and wise men, as well as Mary and Joseph, to retell the story of the birth of Jesus Christ part of the Advent celebration.

Led by their respective teachers Mary Rose Lucero, Florinda Chavez, Lea Maratita, Monette Ladao, and youth volunteer Reann Camacho, students spent days rehearsing lines and songs and preparing costumes.

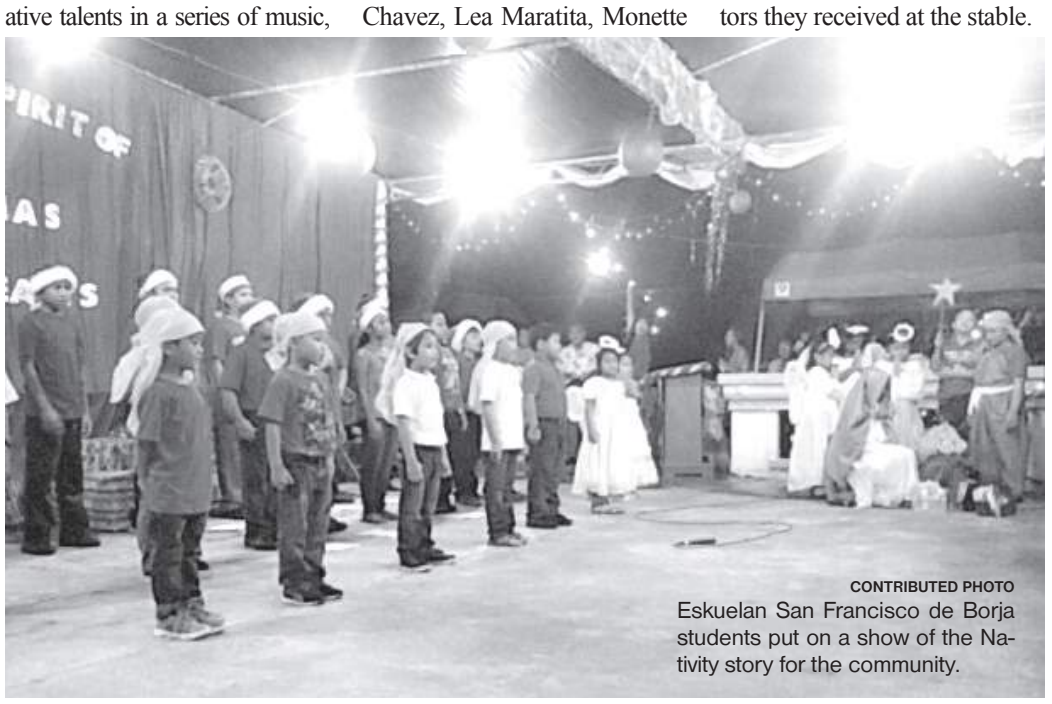
The student performers retraced the steps of Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem, and the gifts bestowed on the newborn child by the visitors they received at the stable.

"Acting out the Nativity story helps young children take an active role in the celebration, and it teaches them the sacred nature of family," said administrator/principal Carmen H. Atalig. "It is a way for our children to understand what Christmas is all about. It also helps to shift the focus of the season away from just gifts or presents, but emphasize that it is Jesus' birthday and we should rejoice."

"The students did an excellent job as they delivered the Nativity story of how Mary and Joseph brought the light of salvation to the world, bringing to life the story as described in the Gospel," said ESFDB board chair Edward Maratita Jr.

Also, the school congratulates the following students for winning the Christmas lantern competition as part of the Christmas lighting celebration. The winners are Angelo S. Lucero (8th), Marvin DLC Clitar (7th), Kaitlyn P. Balgoa (5th), and Éclair M. Ladao (4th).

The event was hosted by the Office of Mayor with the assistance of various government departments. ***(ESFDB)***



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja students put on a show of the Nativity story for the community.

Rota youth volunteers at ESFDB

Reann Mae A. Camacho. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Those four years in high school are the perfect time to volunteer. Although it may seem difficult to find the time to volunteer for a cause that offers no (monetary) payment in return, the benefits you'll draw from the experience may end up being worth more than what you make working that part-time job.

Instead of working and earning money, Reann Mae Aquino Camacho decided to use her spare time and volunteer at Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja.

Camacho's assistance is missed after she left on Dec. 14, 2015, to Illinois for her basic training. She enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

"While I am waiting for my basic training, I wanted to volunteer where I can be helpful. Being a volunteer at ESFDB was so much fun and entertaining," said Camacho.

"The environment was different from being in high school, especially helping in the preschool, which is a challenge," added Camacho.

"The first and biggest benefit people get from volunteering is the satisfaction of incorporating service into their lives and making a difference in their community and country," said administrator/principal Carmen H. Atalig. "Reann is one good example of youth volunteering in their community. Also, I applaud Reann for her commitment and dedication to serve in our all-volunteer armed forces."

"The intangible benefits alone such as pleasure, satisfaction, and accomplishment are worthwhile reasons to volunteer," said ESFDB board chair Edward C. Maratita Jr. "In addition, when we volunteer our time and talents, we solve problems, strengthen communities, improve lives, connect to others, and transform our own lives. Reann's display of time and talent will help in her military career."

The ESFDB family wishes Camacho the best on her future endeavors and she is always welcome to back and lend a helping hand.

A recent graduate of the Class of 2015 from Dr. Rita H. Inos Junior/Senior High, Camacho had been volunteering her time during her high school years with the school's Army Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corps.

In addition, Camacho is active in her church community as an altar server.

Renato I. and Analiza A. Camacho are the proud parents of Reann. She has two siblings: Reziel and Rency.

The administration, faculty and staff, students, and board of directors would like to express their appreciation to the parents and Reann. ***(ESFDB)***

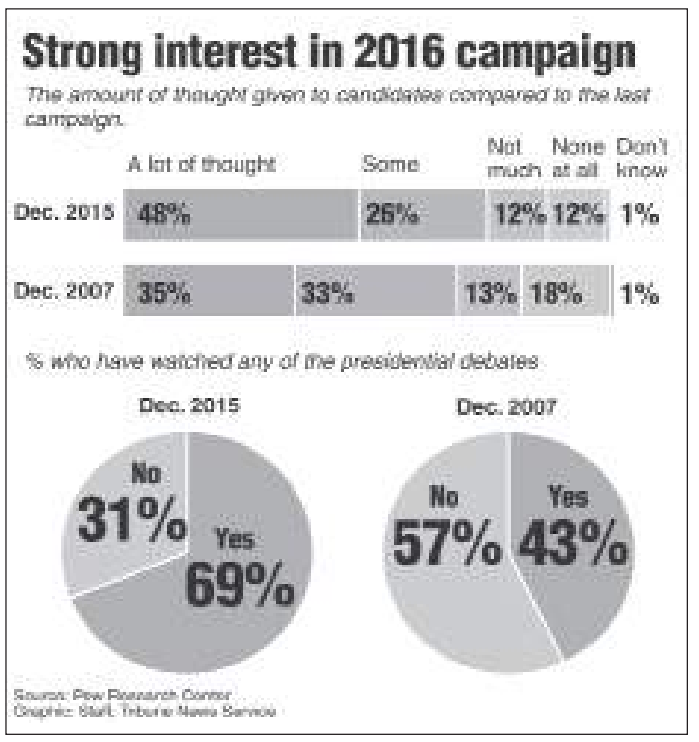
Nation

Cruz and Rubio clash in fifth Republican debate

By JULIE PACE and JULIE BYKOWICZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

Jeb Bush, right, makes a point as Ben Carson, left, Donald Trump, second from left, and Ted Cruz stand by during the CNN Republican presidential debate at the Venetian Hotel & Casino on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015, in Las Vegas.



LAS VEGAS (AP)—In a presidential race reshaped by national security fears, Sens. Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio clashed over U.S. military intervention, government spying on Americans' communications and immigration Tuesday night, as front-runner Donald Trump defended his provocative call for banning Muslims from the United States.

Struggling former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush found his footing in trying to discredit Trump's qualifications for the White House, chiding the brash billionaire for trying to "insult your way to the presidency."

Tuesday night's debate was the first for Republicans since the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California, which heightened fears of terrorism in the United States. The attacks have ignited a political debate about President Barack Obama's campaign to defeat the Islamic State in the Middle East and the nation's security posture in preventing attacks in the U.S.

Trump's call for temporarily banning Muslims from the U.S.—a proposal roundly criticized by his rivals—dominated much of the discussion heading into the debate. He said he wasn't seeking to discriminate against Muslims.

"We are not talking about isolation; we're talking about security," he said. "We are not talking about religion, we are talking about security."

Bush dismissed the proposal as unserious, saying "Donald is great at the one-liners, but he's a chaos candidate and he'd be a chaos president."

In a moment that might help ease anxiety among Republican leaders, Trump pledged he would not seek to run as an independent. If he should lose the nomination, some fear he would make such a move, possibly preventing the nominee from defeating the Democratic challenger. "I am totally committed to the Republican Party," Trump said.

He was largely spared from criticism by Cruz and Rubio, who said they understood why Trump had raised the idea of banning Muslims. Instead, they focused on each other, engaging in lengthy debates over their differences on national security and immigration, one of the most contentious issues in the Republican primary.

Rubio, of Florida, defended his support for eventually providing a pathway to citizenship for some people in the U.S. illegally, an unpopular position within the Republican Party. Rubio was a co-author of comprehensive Senate legislation in 2013 that would have created that pathway, but he has since said the nation's immigration crisis must be addressed in piecemeal fashion, with legalization only an option after the U.S.-Mexico border is secured.

Seeking to draw a sharp contrast with Rubio, Cruz went further than he has previously in opposing legalization for people in the U.S. illegally. He declared: "I have never supported legalization and I do not intend to support legalization."

Teen convicted in rape, murder of high school math teacher

SALEM, Mass. (AP)—A Massachusetts teenager was convicted Tuesday of raping and killing his high school math teacher when he was 14.

Philip Chism followed his ninth-grade algebra teacher, Colleen Ritzer, into a school bathroom, strangled her, stabbed her at least 16 times and raped her.

Chism, now 16, was convicted of a raping Ritzer inside the bathroom but was acquitted of a second rape, committed with a tree branch in woods near the school where Chism put her body. He was also convicted of armed robbery for stealing Ritzer's credit cards and her underwear.

Chism stared straight ahead and did not have any visible reaction as the verdicts were read in Salem Superior Court. His mother declined to talk to reporters as she left the courthouse.

Standing later with the district attorney that prosecuted the case, Ritzer's parents said the verdicts mark a new phase in their lives in which they hope to honor their 24-year-old daughter's legacy.

"This guilty verdict, while the beginning of justice for Colleen, is certainly no cause for celebration as there can never be true justice for the crime committed," said Thomas Ritzer, her father. "There remains a tremendous absence in our lives, one that sadly can never be replaced."

The family, he added, will still be reminded of the crimes as Chism appeals the case and is eligible for parole at some point. "We will carry on and do our very best to find the good in every day," said Peggie Ritzer, the victim's mother.

During the trial, his lawyer admitted Chism killed Ritzer, but said he was suffering from severe mental illness and was not criminally responsible for his actions. A psychiatrist who testified for the defense said Chism was hearing voices and in the throes of a psychotic episode when he killed Ritzer.

Ritzer was a popular teacher at Danvers High School, about 25 miles north of Boston, doing her dream job, teaching math, Assistant District Attorney Kate MacDougall told jurors in her opening statement.

On Oct. 22, 2013, Ritzer asked Chism to stay after school. Another student who also stayed late that day testified that Ritzer tried to engage Chism—a student who had recently moved to Massachusetts—in talk about how his new community compared with his old town of Clarksville, Tennessee. The student said Chism became visibly upset and Ritzer eventually changed the subject.

Abuse investigation leads to 2 dead children in storage unit

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A child abuse investigation led to the bodies of two young children inside a commercial storage unit in Northern California, along with a starving, injured 9-year-old at a house about 140 miles away, authorities said Tuesday.

The 3-year-old girl and 6-year-old boy were found dead Friday at a storage facility in Redding, a city of 91,000 about 300 miles north of San Francisco.

Homicide detectives were investigating, and autopsies were planned for Wednesday. The children's names were not released.

The investigation began with a call about a possible child abuse case in the small Northern California town of Quincy.

On Friday, authorities found the starving 9-year-old at a Quincy home, according to a news release from the Plumas County Sheriff's Office. The unidentified girl was taken to a hospital. No details on her condition were available Tuesday.

Sheriff's officials later arrested a 17-year-old boy and 39-year-old woman on abuse allegations related to the 9-year-old. Each remained jailed Tuesday on $1 million bail. The two were being held on suspicion of felony child abuse, torture and mayhem.

Attorneys Douglas Prouty, who represents the 39-year-old, and Robert Zernich, who represents the teen, both declined to comment. The Associated Press typically does not identify abuse victims; it is not naming the teen or the woman because their relationship to the children is unclear.

The investigation then led authorities about 140 miles northwest, to the Redding storage facility where they found the bodies. A woman who answered the phone there Tuesday declined to comment.

NY, LA schools receive email threats; LA cancels classes

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The nation's two biggest school systems—New York City and Los Angeles—received threats Tuesday of a large-scale jihadi attack with guns and bombs. LA reacted by shutting down the entire district, while New York dismissed the warning as an amateurish hoax and held classes.

It's extremely rare for a major U.S. city to close all its schools because of a threat and it reflected the lingering unease in Southern California following the terrorist attack that killed 14 people at a holiday luncheon two weeks ago in San Bernardino.

In LA, the threat came in the form of an email to a school board member. Authorities in New York reported receiving the same "generic" email and decided there was no danger to schoolchildren. Mayor Bill de Blasio concluded the threat contained "nothing credible."

"It was so outlandish," he said.

New York Police Commissioner William Bratton agreed. Bratton, who was police chief in Los Angeles until 2009, said that it looked like the sender of the threat had watched a lot of the Showtime terrorism drama "Homeland."

Bratton indicated that the type of threats in the email mirrored some recent episodes of the show.

The shutdown closed both public and charter schools across Los Angeles. Officials announced Tuesday evening that schools would reopen Wednesday.

Officials in LA defended the move to shut schools, with that city's police chief dismissing the criticism as "irresponsible."

"We have suffered too many school shootings in America to ignore these kinds of threats," Chief Charlie Beck said at a news conference.

Jordan Tama, an assistant professor at American University specializing in U.S. counterterrorism policy, said it's not unreasonable for authorities in different places to make different decisions based on the same information.

"There certainly is no uniform approach," he said. "Los Angeles might make their decision based on different factors than New York and that would be the case throughout the country."

Against the backdrop of the San Bernardino attack, it's "just human nature" for LA authorities to be more cautious, Tama said.

The threatening 360-word email sent to the New York City school superintendent warned that schools would be attacked with pressure cooker bombs, nerve agents and machine guns. It claimed the writer and "138 comrades" would carry out the attack.

Asia

China's plainclothes officers a force against dissent

BEIJING (AP)—The tough guys wore smiley face stickers, but they weren't there to spread good cheer.

Scenes of pushing, shouting and shoving outside a Beijing courthouse this week were orchestrated by plainclothes security officers identified by a sticker familiar around the world—the yellow decal identified since the 1970s with the slogan "Have a Nice Day."

Their attempts to intimidate journalists, foreign diplomats and a small cohort of human rights advocates outside the trial of a well-known activist lawyer are all-too familiar to China's beleaguered dissident community.

"The plainclothes police are the ones the Communist Party uses when they know what they're doing has no basis in law," said independent environmental activist Wu Lihong, who lives under a form of house arrest that becomes especially strict during sensitive political occasions.

The use of such agents dovetails with the party's desire to pay lip service to the rule by law while quashing all opposition, controlling the public discourse and sentencing critics to lengthy prison terms for hazily defined national security crimes.

A police officer pushes away a foreign journalist, center, covering rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang's trial near the Beijing Second Intermediate People's Court in Beijing, Monday, Dec. 14, 2015. AP

The plainclothes agents did not specifically identify themselves as such, but foreign journalists in Beijing have interacted with them for two decades. They typically appear in civilian clothes in a wide variety of circumstances where foreign media might interact with government critics and authorities want to maintain control without uniformed officers intervening directly.

That was on full display Monday outside Beijing's No. 2 Intermediate Court, where lawyer Pu Zhiqiang was on trial on charges of provoking trouble and stirring ethnic hatred with online commentary critical of one-party rule.

Dozens of journalists were pushed around, including one who was slammed to the ground. At least five protesters were assaulted and taken away in vehicles, while diplomats from the European Union and the United States were interrupted, cursed at and jostled while attempting to read out statements criticizing Beijing's actions.

The smiley face stickers were presumably meant to identify the plainclothes officers to their uniformed colleagues and other security agents. Similarly, plainclothes agents wore green stickers last year to identify themselves while breaking up protests outside the Beijing courthouse where clean government advocate Xu Zhiyong was tried on charges of gathering a crowd to disturb public order.

Xu, founder of the grassroots New Citizens movement, received a four-year sentence. Pu has denied the charges against him and the trial concluded about midday, with his lawyer Shang Baojun saying a verdict and sentence would be delivered at a later date.

As is standard in such cases, the officers on Monday refused to display identification and wore anti-smog face masks to obscure their identities.

Using such anonymous agents, or even independent contractors without official status, offers the government plausible deniability in the event situations might turn nasty. It also allows a degree of flexibility and a buffer between the authorities and actions that might be distasteful or illegal, while permitting uniformed officers to appear reasonable and law-abiding.

At least on Monday, the tactic may have backfired. Images broadcast around the world showed a violent and chaotic scene and drew even-more attention to the case of the lawyer Pu, who is being prosecuted for his past work advocating for political dissidents and government critics including avant-garde artist Ai Weiwei.

Leading Thai seafood boss: AP shrimp probe 'wake-up call'

BANGKOK (AP)—The president of one of the world's biggest seafood exporters expressed frustration and promised change Wednesday after saying an Associated Press investigation that linked slave-peeled shrimp to his company should be a "wake-up call" to the industry.

Thiraphong Chansiri said Thai Union will spend millions of dollars to end reliance on poorly regulated contractors that have been responsible for much of the abuse. He added that under the current system, it's almost impossible to ensure that supply chains are clean.

Chansiri

Like other exporters in Thailand, his company has for years relied heavily on poor migrants working in factories in the port town of Samut Sakhon to peel, gut and devein shrimp.

The AP report revealed Monday that many of these laborers are undocumented and can end up being tricked or sold into factories where they are forced to work 16-hour days with no time off and little or no pay for sometimes years at a time. Some end up locked inside. Others are allowed to go out, but only if they leave their children or spouse behind as a guarantee against running away.

Thiraphong said despite great efforts, Thai Union has been unable to keep labor abuses out of its supply chains. It has tried everything from spot checks by third-party auditors to regular meetings with external suppliers. But problems keep popping up.

"We realized that we could not ensure 100 percent," he said. "Even with the whole system that we established."

He said Thai Union will exclusively use in-house labor for shrimp processing starting Jan. 1, a change he said would cost the company about $5 million.

"This move will provide us with full oversight of all processing stages and will ensure that all workers, whether migrant or Thai, are in safe, legal employment and are treated fairly and with dignity," Thiraphong said.

A day earlier, he called the latest revelations "another wake-up call not only to us, but to the entire industry."

AP journalists followed trucks from an abusive factory raided last month to major Thai distributors, including a Thai Union subsidiary, and traced similar connections from another factory, raided in May, that was directly supplying the parent company.

Thai Union and four other exporters that bought shrimp from the sheds sell to companies around the world. Those retailers and restaurant chains widely condemned the practices that led to these conditions, and many said they were launching investigations.

Big Australian supermarket chain companies, including Coles and Woolworths, were among those that expressed concern.

Coles, Red Lobster, Whole Foods and some other companies said they had been assured by Thai Union that their shipments were clean. Thai Union said shrimp it purchased from the sheds AP tracked did not go to major U.S. companies, while declining to say where it went. In any case, according to U.S. and United Nations standards, if even a single piece of shrimp coming from a company is tied to forced labor, it taints the entire supply chain.

Some said the problem requires a drastic response from big players.

"I guarantee you that if Wal-Mart and Kroger and Red Lobster stopped buying from Thailand until this got fixed, I think pretty soon Thailand would have no choice but to really deal with it," said Buddy Galetti, president of Southwind Foods, a smaller importer in Los Angeles. He said he rarely buys Thai goods.

ASIAN BRIEFS

US general says Afghan IS loyalists growing

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Supporters of the Islamic State group in Afghanistan are attempting to establish a regional base in the eastern city of Jalalabad, the commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, General John Campbell, said on Tuesday. In an interview with The Associated Press, Campbell said that "foreign fighters" from Syria and Iraq had joined Afghans who had declared loyalty to the group in the eastern province of Nangarhar, bordering Pakistan. He said there were also "indications" that the IS supporters in Nangarhar were trying to consolidate links with the group's leadership in Syria and Iraq. The Islamic State group controls large regions of Iraq and Syria. Fighters loyal to the group in Afghanistan include disaffected Afghan and Pakistani Taliban who have fought fierce battles with the Taliban in recent months.

N. Korea sentences Canadian pastor to life in prison

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP)—A North Korean court has sentenced a Canadian pastor to life in prison for what it called crimes against the state. Hyeon Soo Lim, who pastors the Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto, was given the sentence after a brief trial before the North's Supreme Court on Wednesday. Further details were not immediately available. Relatives of Lim have said he travelled to North Korea on Jan. 31 as part of a regular humanitarian mission where he supports a nursing home, a nursery and an orphanage. They said Lim, who is in his early 60s, has made more than 100 trips to North Korea since 1997 and that his trips are about helping people and are not political.

Critics of Thai junta face charges of insulting monarchy

BANGKOK (AP)—Thailand's junta is stepping up its offensive against critics, with a military court on Tuesday sentencing a single mother to seven years in jail for posting material on the Internet said to be insulting to the monarchy, just a day after another person was accused of disparaging the king's dog. Thanakorn Siripaiboon was charged with lese majeste, or insulting the monarchy, for posting an apparently inappropriate photo of royal dog Tongdaeng and for clicking 'Like' on a Facebook page with a derogatory photo of King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Lese majeste in punishable by three to 15 years in prison per incident.

World

Saudi Arabia creates Islamic bloc to fight terror groups

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—Projecting its ambition for regional leadership, Saudi Arabia said Tuesday it has lined up most of the Arab world, NATO member Turkey and several African and Asian countries behind a vaguely defined "Islamic military alliance" against terrorists.

The move allows the kingdom, which follows a deeply conservative interpretation of Islam, to cast itself as a leader in the fight against extremism.

But absent from the alliance are the Shiite-led countries of Iran and Iraq, as well as Syria, whose government is backed by Tehran. And that omission raises questions about whether the 34-member bloc is primarily intended to present a unified front against extremists—or to also serve as a Sunni deterrent to Iran, Saudi Arabia's main regional rival.

Riyadh supports rebels fighting to overthrow Syrian President Bashar Assad and has been leading an Arab coalition against Iran-supported Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen since March. It is also part of the U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq.

The announcement on state media said the Saudi-led alliance is being established because terrorism "should be fought by all means."

Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman said at a rare news conference that the bloc will develop mechanisms for working with other countries and international bodies to support counterterrorism efforts. Their efforts would not be limited to countering the Islamic State group, he added.

"Currently, every Muslim country is fighting terrorism individually ... so coordinating efforts is very important," he said.

Though few details were given, the statement said the alliance would not just be countering Sunni extremists but protecting Muslim nations from all terrorists "whatever their doctrine."

When asked if this meant the alliance would also counter Shiite militants, the Saudi defense minister replied the coalition would fight terrorist groups "regardless of their categorization," particularly in Syria and Iraq, where he said there will be cooperation with the international community.

The U.S. and its allies have trained militarily with the Gulf states and other friendly countries in the region for years, encouraging them to work more closely together.

Last year, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states joined the U.S. in carrying out airstrikes in Syria against the Islamic State, also known as ISIS and ISIL. Many of the Arab countries in the new Saudi-led coalition are part of that existing alliance against IS, though their contributions have waned since March, with Gulf efforts diverted to the Yemen offensive.

The Saudi endeavor appeared to catch some in Washington off-guard. A senior defense official said the U.S. did not know in advance about the plan for the alliance and that officials were working to find out details. The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, visiting Incerlik Air Base in Turkey, said: "In general, at least, it appears that it's very much aligned with something that we've been urging for quite some time, which is greater involvement in the campaign to combat ISIL by Sunni Arab countries."

Dozens killed, hurt in airstrikes on fuel market in Syria

BEIRUT (AP)—Airstrikes on a fuel market in a rebel-held village in northern Syria killed and wounded dozens on Tuesday and destroyed several tanker trucks, two Syrian opposition monitoring groups reported.

Opposition activists said warplanes also struck a popular market in the northern village of Maskaneh that is under the control of the Islamic State group, killing at least 18 people and wounding many others.

It was not immediately clear whose warplanes carried out the strikes, although the monitoring groups said the Russians targeted both markets.

The fuel market in the village of Maaret al-Naasan mostly sells diesel brought from areas under the control of the Islamic State group. The airstrikes on the market are likely part of a campaign to target the oil trade that is a major source of income for IS. The extremist group controls nearly half of Syria.

Russian warplanes as well as those of the U.S.-led coalition have destroyed hundreds of tanker trucks that are used to ferry oil from fields under the control of IS in eastern Syria to other parts of the country. The warplanes have also struck oil facilities in the eastern province of Deir el-Zour in recent weeks.

The Local Coordination Committees said Tuesday's airstrikes on Maaret al-Naasan were carried out by Russian warplanes and that they killed and wounded dozens of people.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the airstrikes killed 16 and wounded dozens more. The Observatory's chief Rami Abdurrahman said the warplanes were believed to have been Russian.

"This is part of the campaign against Daesh," Abdurrahman said, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

Assad can stay, for now: Kerry accepts Russian stance

MOSCOW (AP)—U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Tuesday accepted Russia's long-standing demand that President Bashar Assad's future be determined by his own people, as Washington and Moscow edged toward putting aside years of disagreement over how to end Syria's civil war.

"The United States and our partners are not seeking so-called regime change," Kerry told reporters in the Russian capital after meeting President Vladimir Putin. A major international conference on Syria would take place later this week in New York, Kerry announced.

Kerry reiterated the U.S. position that Assad, accused by the West of massive human rights violations and chemical weapons attacks, won't be able to steer Syria out of more than four years of conflict.

But after a day of discussions with Assad's key international backer, Kerry said the focus now is "not on our differences about what can or cannot be done immediately about Assad." Rather, it is on facilitating a peace process in which "Syrians will be making decisions for the future of Syria."

Kerry's declarations crystallized the evolution in U.S. policy on Assad over the last several months, as the Islamic State group's growing influence in the Middle East has taken priority.

President Barack Obama first called on Assad to leave power in the summer of 2011, with "Assad must go" being a consistent rallying cry. Later, American officials allowed that he wouldn't have to resign on "Day One" of a transition. Now, no one can say when Assad might step down.

Russia, by contrast, has remained consistent in its view that no foreign government could demand Assad's departure and that Syrians would have to negotiate matters of leadership among themselves. Since late September, it has been bombing terrorist and rebel targets in Syria as part of what the West says is an effort to prop up Assad's government.

"No one should be forced to choose between a dictator and being plagued by terrorists," Kerry said. However, he described the Syrian opposition's demand that Assad must leave as soon as peace talks begin as a "nonstarting position, obviously."

UK astronaut Tim Peake puts space back on Britain agenda

AP

British astronaut Tim Peake, a member of the main crew of the expedition to the International Space Station (ISS), waves to his children from a bus prior to the launch of Soyuz TMA-19M space ship at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015.

LONDON (AP)—Britain has decided to boldly go where others have gone before.

More than half a century after Yuri Gagarin became the first human in orbit, the U.K. is experiencing a surge of space mania thanks to its first official astronaut—a soft-spoken pilot named Tim who will spend some of his six-month stint on the International Space Station attempting to brew a decent cup of tea in zero gravity.

Millions around the country paused in front of TVs and computer screens Tuesday to watch a Russian Soyuz spacecraft carrying Maj. Tim Peake and two other astronauts—Timothy Kopra of the United States and Yuri Malenchenko of Russia—blast off from Kazakhstan's Baikonur Cosmodrome.

Peake, a 43-year-old former army helicopter pilot, is not the first Briton in space. Helen Sharman visited Russia's Mir space station in 1991 on a privately backed mission and several British-born American citizens flew with NASA's space shuttle program.

But Peake is Britain's first publicly funded British astronaut and the first Briton to visit the International Space Station. The spacecraft docked successfully at the space station roughly six hours after liftoff.

For decades, cost-conscious British governments declined to invest in human space flight, confining the U.K.'s space contribution to robotic missions.

"The U.K. has taken an understandably hard economic view of human space flight over the years and asked itself what it might be worth," said Kevin Fong, an expert in space medicine who will explore how to survive in space in this year's Royal Institution Christmas science lectures. "The answer to that question is quite a lot, actually."

He said Peake's voyage "has already inspired schoolchildren, and will go on to do so. But there's a wider importance in showing that Britain is not done exploring yet."

The government has been raising Britain's space aspirations for several years. In 2010 it set up the U.K. Space Agency, which has a relatively modest budget of about 320 million pounds ($485 million) a year.

This week the Conservative government announced Britain's first National Space Policy, which aims to capture 10 percent of the global space industry and create 100,000 high-tech jobs—though it's unclear how these goals will be funded.

Peake's voyage has helped millions of Britons rediscover an excited interest in outer space.

One British reporter at a pre-launch press conference told Peake that "you will be taking the pride and excitement of everybody back home, so much so that you probably won't need any fuel to get into orbit."

As Peake psyched himself for liftoff Tuesday by listening to tracks by Queen, U2 and Coldplay, the BBC offered wall-to-wall TV coverage, complete with good-luck messages from Sting, Prime Minister David Cameron and "Doctor Who" star Peter Capaldi. At London's Science Museum, hundreds of students cheered wildly as the rocket lifted off.

Aboard the space station, Peake will conduct experiments on how the human body reacts in space.

And in a distinctly British contribution to science, he will try out a new tea-making process that lets him remove the teabag from the drink pouches used in zero gravity.

"That way," Peake told students during a question-and-answer session last month, "I can spend as long as I like drinking my tea and it won't get stewed, and hopefully it won't get cold either."

Life & Style

Celebs at 'Star Wars' premiere offer glowing reviews online

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Film critics may not weigh in on the latest "Star Wars" film until early Wednesday, but celebrity guests at the Hollywood premiere are already flooding the social media galaxy with praise for "The Force Awakens."

The most breathlessly anticipated film of the year was finally screened Monday night, ending a period of unprecedented cinema secrecy that's kept everything but the barest details under wraps from almost everyone. And while story specifics are still scant, the initial response is universal: it's exactly what fans have been waiting for.

"It was epic, awesome & perfect," actor Rainn Wilson, who attended the premiere dressed as a Jedi, wrote on Twitter. "The cast was stellar. JJ killed it!"

Walt Disney Studios, which will release "The Force Awakens" globally later this week, is keeping reviews of the film under embargo until 3:01 a.m. EST on Wednesday, but famous fans couldn't help but gush.

"Holy crap, that Star Wars #TheForceAwakens is so good in the best old-school way!" Shonda Rhimes wrote on Twitter.

"There's a new hero in town, in a movie that DELIVERS," Rob Lowe posted. "Cried like a baby, whooped like a teen! #StarWarsForceAwakens."

Stars were just as effusive in person at Monday night's premiere.

"I loved it," actor-director Zach Braff told The Associated Press immediately after the premiere. "I thought J.J. did an amazing job. My favorite part was just seeing the camaraderie between the veteran and the new cast members."

Comedian Patton Oswalt said "The Force Awakens" brought him back to what made him fall in love with "Star Wars" in the first place.

"It was a lot of fun," he said after watching the film inside the TCL Chinese Theatre, where "Star Wars" first premiered in 1977. "I had the same feeling as when I would watch these films as a kid."

He continued sharing his thoughts on Twitter.

"JJ did it," he wrote. "And without spoiling it, I can say that #StarWarsForceAwakens has the BEST final shot of any Star Wars film. Wow."

Actor Josh Gad, whose Twitter page is fronted by a photo of the Millennium Falcon, was also taken back to his childhood by the latest "Star Wars" installment.

"Congrats to #JJAbrams and the entire cast and crew on an incredible film," Gad wrote on Twitter amid a flurry of posts from the premiere. "#ForceAwakens made me a giddy 10 year old all over again."

AP

Harrison Ford, left, and Calista Flockhart arrive at the world premiere of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" at the TCL Chinese Theatre on Monday, Dec. 14, 2015, in Los Angeles.

"Star Wars" fan's dream job: Crafting realistic lightsabers

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—This is not your father's lightsaber, Luke. This is not the weapon of a Jedi Knight, but the handcrafted replica of a Taiwanese man who disliked the official "Star Wars" products, started making his own blades and now sells them for up to $400 each.

It's a booming business for Tsai Jung-chou, enough for him to quit his optical engineering job three years ago and make models of the iconic sci-fi weapon full-time. He says his mailbox is flooded with orders from fans around the world.

The 32-year-old says his model, a metal hilt attached to a glowing polycarbonate tube, is the brightest and strongest on the market, strong enough to use in gentle duels. He even offers to replace or fix those that break in mock combat.

And while it won't cut metal, his lightsaber certainly sounds like the real thing when it's turned on, with a motion-sensor soundboard that generates the humming and buzzing heard in the movies.

Producing a realistic replica of the fictional weapon was a decade-long quest for the Tsai, who is better known by his alias Makoto Tsai.

He was smitten when he first saw "Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones" in 2002. But he was sorely disappointed with the lightsaber he bought from the franchise. The light was dim and the blade seemed wimpy.

So he decided to build his own. He enrolled in an optical engineering school at a Taiwanese university and asked professors for advice.

"I was just a student. I didn't have lots of money," he said. "So I thought I should just make one myself because I like to make things myself anyway."

Tsai went on to work as an engineer for a high-power laser design company.

After years of experimentation, he came up with a design using an LED light strip that lights up in sequence, giving a scrolling effect as it powers up.

Tsai posted video clips of his handicraft on YouTube and other Internet sites, which were then reposted on Star Wars fan websites. Soon he had people contacting him and offering to pay for what he calls "Makoto's lightsaber."

Each model takes two to three days to finish, Tsai says. Prices range from $200 to $400 for the top models. He also provides upgrades to any current or older models. He hasn't kept track of how many he has made, but produces about 10-15 a month since he went full-time in 2012.

In the days leading up to the premier of the newest installment, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," Tsai hung out with his friends dressed in Star Wars character costumes—and was busily making more lightsabers.

"I am actually happy that Disney has bought this movie franchise. They brought all the old characters—Luke, Princess Lea and Han Solo," he said. "I watched the trailer so many times and every time I cry. I get so emotional."

As for now, Tsai has no plan to expand his business. For him, becoming a master lightsaber maker is a dream come true.

Does he ever worry what he would do for a living if lightsabers faded in popularity?

"That's just not going to happen," he said. "Never."

AP

In this Dec. 14, 2015, photo, 32-year-old Tsai Jung-chou, also known as "Makoto Tsai", compares his upgrade of a replica Star Wars lightsaber, left, with his personally designed LEDs and sound card at his home workshop in New Taipei City, Taiwan.

At last, lovemaking for Sheldon and Amy on 'Big Bang Theory'

BURBANK, Calif. (AP)—In the same week, "Star Wars" returns and scientists-in-love Sheldon and Amy finally consummate their relationship on "The Big Bang Theory." Could even the geekiest fan ask for more?

On Thursday's episode (8 p.m. EDT, CBS), Jim Parsons' Sheldon and Mayim Bialik's Amy have sex for the first time, with each other or anyone else, more than six TV seasons after meeting through an online dating site.

But let the stars of the top-rated comedy tell you about it.

"Amy's been eager all along for a different kind of connection, but it's actually initiated by Sheldon," Bialik said.

"Sheldon's eager for her to know she's special to him, and this is one of the items on the list that he feels could show that," Parsons said.

So romantic! And how explicit is the scene?

Bialik: "More than we thought. We're in bed."

Parsons: "Well, of course we are. We aren't going into the back of a car."

Bialik: "I thought we would just talk about it when it finally happened."

Parsons (dismissively): "Oh, no!"

Bialik: "There's a before and there's an after. There's no during."

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens," out Friday in the real world, is used as a comic device throughout the episode and even threatens to derail the couple's coupling.

After deciding to give Amy the gift of sex on her birthday, Sheldon realizes there's a conflict with his opening-day movie ticket. He gets sage advice from the late Professor Proton, his childhood hero resurrected in ghostly form as a figment of Sheldon's subconscious.

The great Bob Newhart returns as the professor, grandly decked out in Obi-Wan Kenobi robes.

"It's hard for him (Sheldon) to understand that Amy won't accept the fact that this is the premiere of 'Star Wars,' so I have to present that side," Newhart said.

His delivery is as droll and his timing as impeccable as ever, Newhart milks the scene for all it's worth.

"Can I get out of this muu-muu now?" Proton asks after counseling Sheldon.

"Those are the robes of the Jedi, the guardians of peace and justice in the galaxy," Sheldon replies.

"And they don't wear underwear," the professor complains.

Parsons and Bialik also make the most of the smartly—and sweetly—written episode, stumbling toward intimacy with tender regard for each other.

Series executive producer and co-creator Chuck Lorre, a master of network TV comedy whose credits include "Two and a Half Men," ''Mike & Molly" and "Mom," had a look of eager anticipation when he arrived for the episode's taping last month at a Warner Bros. soundstage.

'Mad Max' leads Critics' Choice Awards nominations with 13

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Mad Max: Fury Road" was critically acclaimed upon its release over the summer, and now it's the top nominee at the Critics' Choice Awards.

The film collected 13 bids, including best picture, director (George Miller), actress (Charlize Theron) and actor (Tom Hardy), when nominations were announced Monday. "Carol," ''The Martian" and "The Revenant" each received nine nominations, including best picture and best director. "Spotlight" followed with eight bids, while dark comedy "The Big Short" collected seven.

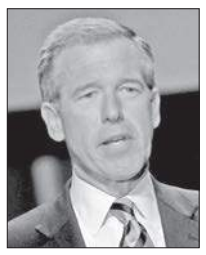
FX Networks' "Fargo" dominated TV nominees with eight nods, including best limited series, actor (Patrick Wilson) and actress (Kirsten Dunst). HBO's "The Leftovers" and Amazon's "Transparent" each received six nominations.

The Critics' Choice Awards will be presented Jan. 17 at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California, and broadcast live on Lifetime and A&E.

AP

This photo released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Tom Hardy in a scene from, "Mad Max:Fury Road."

Williams back on air for NBC News with LA school closures



Williams

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A threat of violence against Los Angeles schools brought Brian Williams back on-air for NBC News.

In his first appearance since losing his anchor job, Williams handled a NBC News special report Tuesday on the closure of LA public schools.

Lester Holt, who replaced Williams as "NBC Nightly News" anchor, was out sick.

NBC News said Williams reported on the LA schools story one day after returning from back surgery to repair a herniated disc. He anchored from New York, joined by Pete Williams in Washington and Joe Fryer in Los Angeles.

Earlier this year, Williams was suspended for six months after acknowledging that he misled viewers about his role in news stories. He returned as an anchor in September, reassigned to handling breaking news on MSNBC.

When NBC News created Williams' new role, it included handling special network reports if Holt was unavailable.

Howard Stern announces 5-year deal with Sirius XM

Stern

NEW YORK (AP)—Much has changed for Howard Stern and SiriusXM since their first deal a decade ago—except for their desire to stay in business together.

The company announced Tuesday its third five-year deal to keep Stern's radio show at SiriusXM, together with a longer-term video arrangement that will allow fans to see as well as hear his program and have access to 30 years of career highlights.

Financial terms were not disclosed. Since it includes a 12-year provision giving Sirius control of Stern's archives, it is likely well north of the $500 million deal made when he moved from terrestrial to satellite radio in 2006, which was then an important step in establishing a fledgling industry.

Once radio's ultimate shock jock known for salacious material, Stern at 61 has grown mellower and the show's signature is becoming its in-depth interviews with celebrities like Bill Murray, Gwyneth Paltrow, Neil Young, Bradley Cooper, Chris Rock and others.

The kind of edgy material in which Stern once specialized is now available widely on the Internet, said Scott Greenstein, Sirius president and chief content officer. His stint as a judge on NBC's "America's Got Talent," which ended this past summer, also presented a different side of Stern to an audience that may only have known his reputation.

"Stern has had to evolve more into what he always was—an amazingly authentic performer, intelligent and authentic," said Michael Harrison, publisher of Talkers, a radio trade publication.

Sirius, meanwhile, is the house that Stern built. A money-losing venture with 600,000 subscribers when he signed, it merged with competitor XM in 2008 and now has 29 million subscribers and annual revenue of $4.5 billion, with more than $1 billion in profits. Seven in 10 new cars sold are equipped with its service.

Tuesday's deal eliminates the last short-term worry for investors about the company, said Matthew Harrigan, an analyst at Wunderlich Securities, Inc. Shares of SiriusXM Holdings Inc. rose 12 cents, or 3 percent, to $4.12 in morning trading. They are up almost 18 percent so far this year.

Stern had his own unique take on the company's prospects.

"If you are not listening to SiriusXM and 'The Howard Stern Show,' then you are really more like a zombie, a rotting corpse monster, living half a life, deadened and blackened inside," he said. "It's as if you were still watching black and white television while shopping in actual stores on your way to the post office to fax a memo."

On his show Tuesday, Stern described the deal as a move into the future. "You'll be able to get everything you want in audio and video—and then some," he said, as the music to "Star Trek" played in the background.

Stern works on his own channel Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., although some weeks he works three days. He has two satellite channels on Sirius.

Specific plans for how use of the archival material will be announced later. While Stern mentioned streaming of his morning show, Meyer said there have been no discussions yet about simulcasting it on television.

Schumer, Morgan, make Barbara Walters' most fascinating list

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Amy Schumer, Tracy Morgan and ballerina Misty Copeland are on Barbara Walters' list of the most fascinating people of the year.

Others who made the cut for Walters' ABC special include Bradley Cooper, fighter Ronda Rousey, Democratic presidential contender Bernie Sanders and Donna Karan. Others are to be announced.

The person deemed the most fascinating of all will be announced on "Barbara Walters Presents: The 10 Most Fascinating People of 2015."

The 90-minute special airs Thursday at 9:30 p.m. Eastern.

This marks the 23rd year that TV journalist and host Walters has ranked and interviewed celebrities and newsmakers.

Murky circumstances of crime cloud convict's welcome home

DEAR ABBY: After I became an adult and left home, my father remarried a woman with a grown son. "Jack" has been incarcerated for the past several years. I have only vague information about what he did, but I do know it was related to drugs and gang affiliation.

His mother insists he was "framed" and refuses to talk about the charges. I haven't been able to find any public information except that this wasn't the first time he was arrested. My father has hinted that there is a bigger story there, but he keeps quiet out of respect for his wife's feelings.

Jack will be released soon, and my stepmom is already planning big family events for us to welcome him home. I have a wife and kids now, and I'm not sure I want them around an ex-con. At the same time, I don't really know what happened, and I don't want to start a family rift. What should I do next?

WHAT'S THE SECRET?

DEAR WHAT'S: Talk to your father and tell him that unless you know the whole story about what Jack did that you will not be a part of the welcome home party. As a parent, you have a right to know whether your children could be in danger if they are around him and base your decision on it. Not that Jack might ever hurt your children, but should a rival gang member come after him, they might be collateral damage, as we so often read about these days. Better to err on the side of caution.

DEAR ABBY: I was divorced 10 years ago. My children are all over 21. I talk with them once a month, but I contact my ex-wife only when there's an issue that relates to our kids.

My ex now has cancer. When she dies, am I expected to attend the funeral? I would like to go as a show of respect to my kids. However, I don't know how they would react because they know I have had little contact with their mother for the last decade.

The same question goes for my ex-mother-in-law, who is almost 90. I had a good relationship with her until the divorce, at which point she would no longer talk to me. Should I be there since she is the grandmother of my children?

PLANNING AHEAD

DEAR PLANNING: I think your question may be somewhat premature. Your relationship with your ex-wife and her mother may improve before anyone dies—and let's admit it, YOU could be the one to go first.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

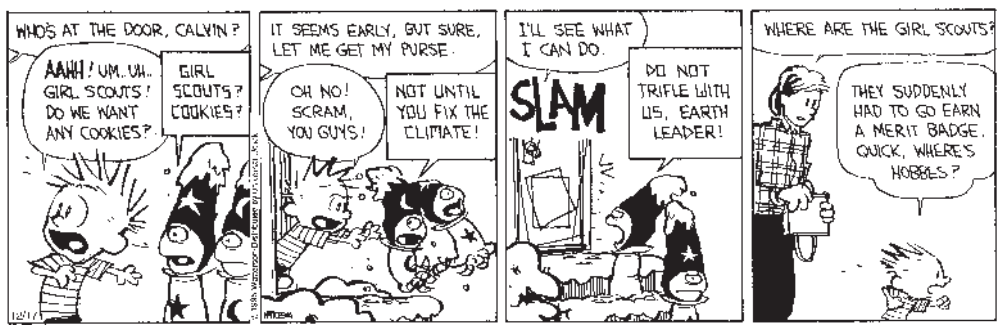
If there is any chance that your presence at her mother's funeral would upset your ex-wife, then I vote for skipping it and explaining the reason to your children. As to attending your ex's funeral when (and IF) the time comes, remember that funerals are to comfort the living. During one of your monthly conversations with your children—once your ex-wife is determined to be terminal and NOT before—ask what their wishes are and abide by them.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WHO'S AT THE DOOR, CALVIN?
AAHH! UM..UH.. GIRL SCOUTS! DO WE WANT ANY COOKIES?
GIRL SCOUTS? COOKIES?
IT SEEMS EARLY, BUT SURE, LET ME GET MY PURSE.
OH NO! SCRAM, YOU GUYS!
NOT UNTIL YOU FIX THE CLIMATE!
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
SLAM
DO NOT TRIFLE WITH US, EARTH LEADER!
WHERE ARE THE GIRL SCOUTS?
THEY SUDDENLY HAD TO GO EARN A MERIT BADGE. QUICK, WHERE'S HOBBES?

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

THE SMELL OF THESE FRESHLY BAKED COOKIES WILL GET GARFIELD OUT OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE
KA-THUMP KA-THUMP KA-THUMP KA-THUMP KA-THUMP
JIM DAVIS 12-17

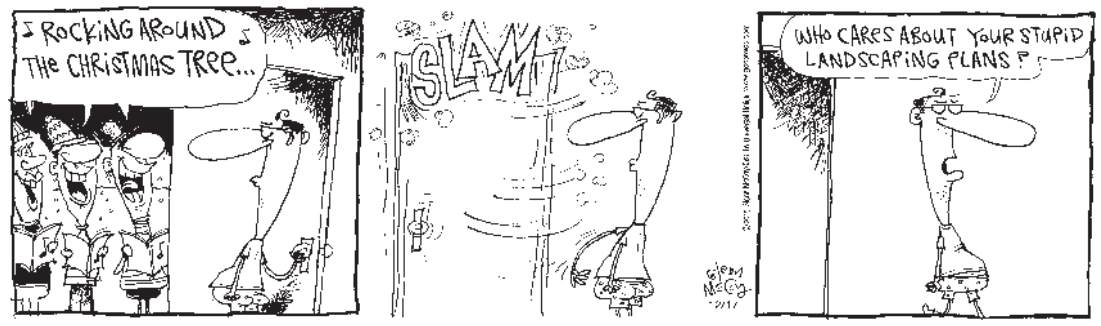
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

GOOD NIGHT, SWEETIE.
LEAVE THE LIGHT ON!!
I'M...I'M A LITTLE FREAKED OUT. CLAYTON'S ZOMBIE CHRISTMAS STORY HAS ME SPOOKED.
YOU? MY TOUGH LITTLE FEARLESS KATY?
I KNOW. I KNOW. IT'S OUT OF CHARACTER.
IT MUST BE SOME STORY.
I...I WASN'T EXPECTING THE FLESH-EATING CANDY CANES.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

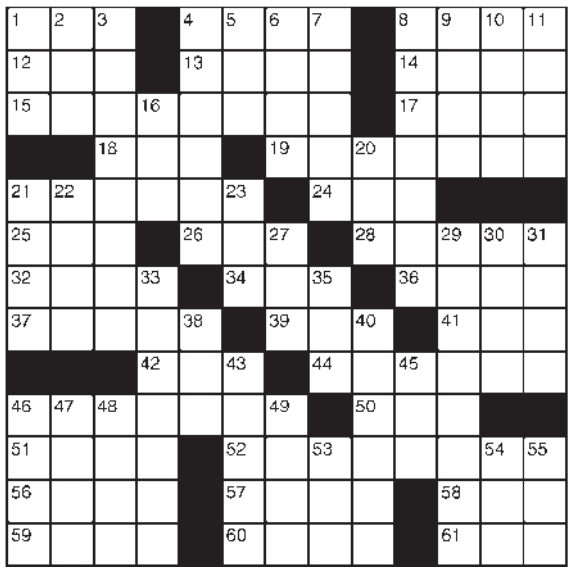
ACROSS
1 Sit-up targets
4 Blue ox
8 Gab
12 Colon half
13 "The Good Wife" heroine
14 QB Tony
15 Sci-fi classic with Han Solo
17 "East of Eden" twin
18 Dust-up
19 Bacardi-spiked dessert
21 No-nos
24 "Spiders!"
25 E. Lansing sch.
26 "Sez —?"
28 Experts
32 Make an impression?
34 "Ick!"
36 Dessert wine
37 Unclad
39 — -tac-toe
41 Low isle
42 Rule in India
44 Thrill
46 — cream pie
50 Tooth-care deg.
51 Mata, the spy
52 Texas symbol
56 — end (over)
57 Soprano player Robert
58 Bird (Pref.)
59 "Woe —!"
60 "What a pity!"
61 Gym unit

DOWN
1 TV spots
2 Droid
3 "Moby-Dick" first mate
4 Arf's kin
5 Mode lead-in
6 Riotous Roseanne
7 Follow
8 Bust a gut
9 Circle dance
10 Run — (go wild)
11 Firm (up)
16 Kanga's kid
20 Jo's older sister
21 Ness and co.
22 Nora's dog
23 Bashful
27 Ump's yell
29 Sting or Bono
30 Russian range
31 Eyelid sore
33 Female protagonist
35 DIY buy
38 Dapper —
40 Apple drinks
43 "Pretty Woman" co-star
45 DJ's disks
46 Spiced tea
47 Steed feed
48 Study like mad
49 Road fee
53 PBS funder
54 Rd. crosser
55 Tear

Solution time: 24 mins.

P	A	N	■	T	A	L	C	■	P	A	L	S
E	R	E	■	O	A	T	H	■	C	H	O	H
■	I	X	■	C	H	R	I	S	T	I	N	E
A	Z	T	E	C	■	■	A	P	P	■	■	■
■	■	■	M	A	I	I	■	A	I	D	E	S
■	H	E	S	T	A	N	D	■	E	A	S	E
U	A	R	■	A	R	A	I	L	■	W	A	G
R	I	N	G	■	I	N	S	O	M	N	I	A
F	R	E	O	N	■	E	C	R	U	■	■	■
■	■	■	T	A	U	■	E	D	I	F	Y	■
S	A	L	E	M	S	L	O	T	■	C	L	E
A	S	I	A	■	P	E	A	T	■	T	A	T
C	A	L	M	■	S	O	F	A	■	A	N	I

Yesterday's answer 12-17



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Milla Jovovich, 40; Bill Pullman, 62; Eugene Levy, 69; Ernie Hudson, 70.

Happy Birthday: Rely on facts, not hearsay. Figure out what you want and what you are up against before you make a move that will put you in an irreversible place or position. Think matters through and gather as much information as possible. Use your insight and intuition to drive you in the direction best suited to your personality and qualifications. Your numbers are 4, 11, 15, 26, 33, 35, 46.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't share too much information about your health, finances or personal preferences. Being a good listener will give you the upper hand as well as a wealth of knowledge that will help you get ahead. Make subtle changes. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Make travel arrangements or plans for the upcoming festive season. The extra research you do now will come in handy as the year comes to a close. Make upgrades professionally or physically. You'll receive positive feedback for the tweaks you make. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't let being overgenerous be your downfall. It's OK to want to help someone, but paying for others' mistakes is not an option. Use your intelligence and offer solutions or hands-on help. End the year carrying as little debt as possible. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Do whatever it takes to obtain the information you need to make a decision. You are in a high cycle regarding personal and professional partnerships, and if you put more into your associations with others, you can make positive changes. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Slow down. Arguments will flare up with someone you live with if you jump to conclusions. Give others a chance to explain themselves and you will spare yourself grief and be more capable of making the right choices. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Don't worry too much about what others are doing. Take care of your responsibilities and keep moving forward. Time is of the essence as the year comes to a close. Don't let an emotional incident throw you off guard. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't make waves when dealing with loved ones or domestic matters. Focus on what's going on with friends and relatives or groups in your community. Pitching in and helping a cause will bring about favorable changes and interesting friendships. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): An unusual addition to your home is apparent. Explore your options and implement changes to the way you live. Don't make an impulsive change because someone else does. Follow your heart and do what's best for you. Love is highlighted. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): A positive change at home is heading your way. Avoid letting outside influences interfere in your life. Don't listen to rumors or indulge in exaggeration. Helping others will encourage you to be thoughtful and compassionate. Put muscle behind your words. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Communication will be your vehicle to success if you keep your debates respectful. Someone from your past will help stabilize a situation. An emotional matter is best cleared up quickly. Compromise is your best bet. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Question what you are doing with your life. You need to shake things up a bit. Open up a dialogue with the people your decisions will affect, and you will receive interesting suggestions that will help you move forward. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You will be sensitive to other people's thoughts and feelings. Ask questions and find out where you stand. Passing a milestone will help you head into the new year with optimism. Celebrate the choices you make with someone you love. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intuitive, smart and resourceful. You are inventive and inquisitive.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8					2			7
		3						
			9		3		4	
6		7	5		8	3		
		9	3		7	2		1
	8		4		1			
						1		
5			2					6

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	4	2	7	6	9	8	1	5
8	6	1	2	5	4	3	9	7
9	7	5	3	8	1	2	4	6
7	8	9	4	3	6	1	5	2
5	2	6	9	1	7	4	8	3
4	1	3	5	2	8	6	7	9
2	5	4	1	9	3	7	6	8
1	3	8	6	7	5	9	2	4
6	9	7	8	4	2	5	3	1

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/17

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

CHRIS KYLE (1974-2013) **Solution: 4 letters**

L	G	E	H	M	A	R	K	S	M	A	N	F	M	M
L	I	N	L	E	G	E	N	D	I	Q	I	N	E	I
I	Y	N	I	F	L	E	T	H	A	L	E	A	R	L
K	S	R	S	N	I	P	E	R	M	S	V	R	C	I
S	T	A	T	I	I	R	I	H	E	S	R	E	E	T
P	T	H	X	N	G	A	U	C	U	C	E	T	R	A
R	W	A	G	E	U	N	R	O	E	O	S	E	D	R
O	A	Y	R	I	T	O	I	T	N	T	H	V	E	Y
C	R	A	R	I	F	R	C	A	C	T	O	Z	B	V
E	R	T	N	D	O	H	C	E	E	C	N	E	K	A
N	I	G	E	T	A	I	T	N	A	O	D	S	S	N
I	O	M	I	R	R	O	N	T	R	L	A	D	E	M
R	R	R	L	E	R	E	E	B	Ⓨ	Ⓣ	Ⓤ	Ⓓ	A	A
A	E	I	M	P	K	O	O	B	O	O	P	A	L	S
M	E	A	N	N	E	K	C	M	E	N	Y	A	W	K

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Advocate, American, Armed Forces, Book, Bronze, Charlie, Colton, Country, Deby, Duty, Fight, Film, Hunting, Insignia, Iraq, Kenneth, Legend, Lethal, Marine Corps, Marksman, Mask, McKenna, Medal, Mercer, Meritorious, Military, Navy, Pals, Protect, Rifle, Scott, SEAL, Serve, Silver, Skill, Sniper, Star, Task, Taya, Texas, Training, Veteran, Warrior, Wayne

Yesterday's Answer: Jambalaya

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

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Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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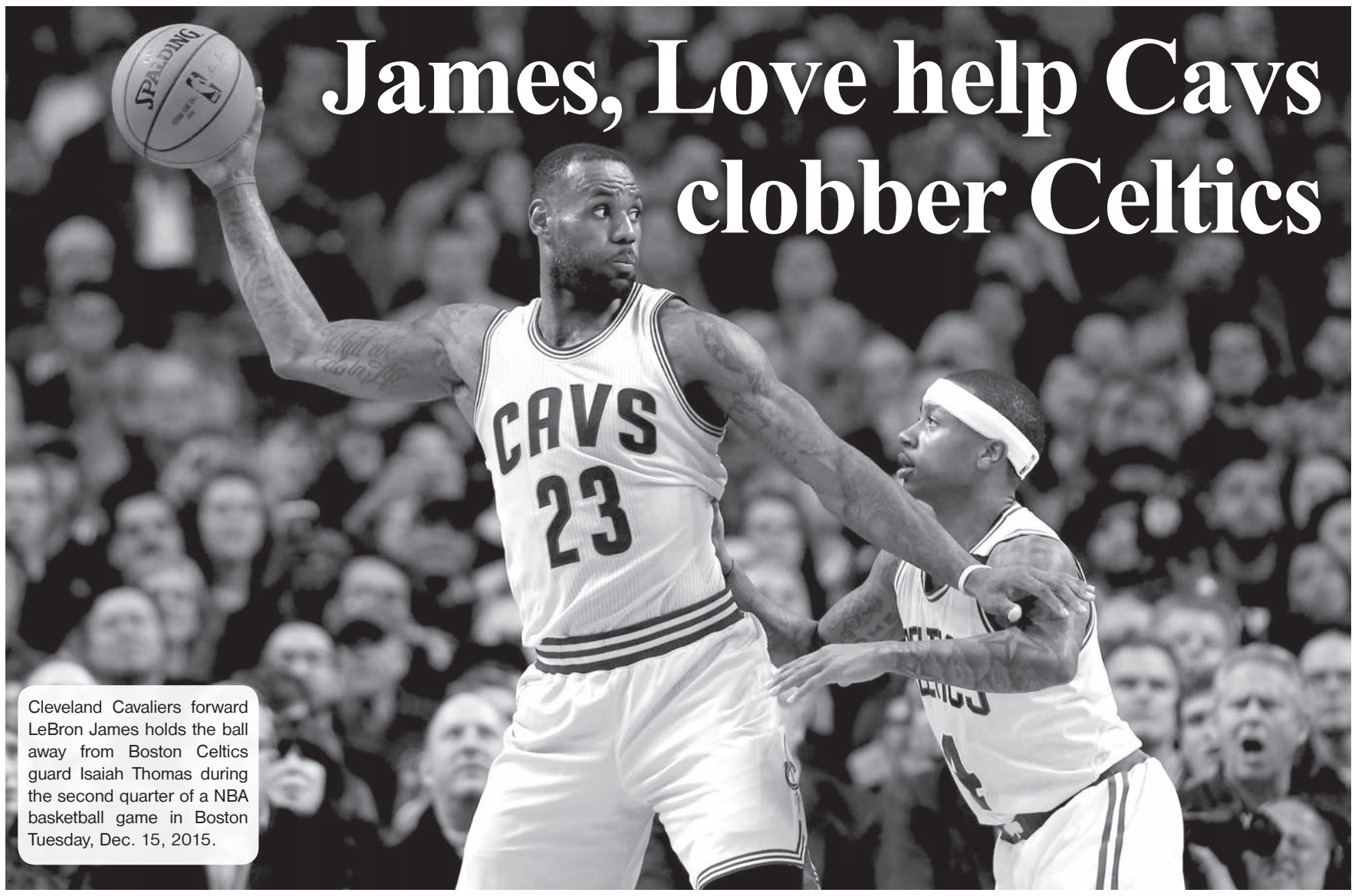

Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James holds the ball away from Boston Celtics guard Isaiah Thomas during the second quarter of a NBA basketball game in Boston Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015.

BOSTON (AP)— LeBron James scored 24 points to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers to an 89-77 victory over the Boston Celtics on Tuesday night in an uneventful rematch of their bruising first-round playoff series last season.

Kevin Love scored 20 with eight rebounds in his first game back in Boston since Kelly Olynyk yanked his shoulder out of socket in the playoffs. Jae Crowder, who took a punch in the jaw from J.R. Smith in the series, scored 14 for the Celtics.

Timofey Mozgov had nine points and a season-high 10 rebounds, scoring seven with five boards in the third quarter when Cleveland turned a five-point deficit into a 10-point lead. The Cavaliers have won three in a row since losing three straight to start the month.

Avery Bradley scored 17 points for Boston, which was back home for the first time since taking the then-unbeaten Golden State Warriors to double overtime. While that Friday night crowd had a playoff atmosphere— it's the NBA champion Warriors' only trip to Boston of the season—the visit by James and the Cavaliers was more subdued.

There were thousands of empty seats at the opening jump in the balcony at the new Boston Garden and even down in its lower bowl. And while the arena eventually filled up, the excitement only lasted for three quarters.

Celtics fans booed James all night and got behind their team when Isaiah Thomas drove for a layup that gave Boston a 50-45 lead with 9 minutes left in the third. But Love hit a 3-pointer to start Cleveland on a 12-0 run; James scored six, including a reverse dunk to finish it off.

In all, the Cavaliers scored 17 of 19 points to take a 62-52 lead.

The game was a rematch of the four-game Cleveland playoff sweep, a chippy series that will perhaps best be remembered for the play in which Olynyk yanked Love's shoulder. Love missed the remainder of the Cavaliers' playoff run, which took them to the NBA Finals before they lost to the Warriors in six games.

Cavaliers point guard Kyrie Irving broke his kneecap in the Finals and he hasn't played since, though coach David Blatt said in Boston that it was just a matter of waiting for the 2011 No. 1 overall draft pick to be 100 percent.

Nuggets 112, Timberwolves 100

In Minneapolis, Randy Foye scored 19 points, and the Denver Nuggets picked up their sixth win in seven games with a 112-100 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday night.

Kenneth Faried added 19 points and 10 rebounds, Will Barton had 14 points, seven boards and five assists, and the Nuggets (11-14) shot 56 percent against the porous Timberwolves defense. Foye broke out of a season-long slump to hit 5 of 6 3-pointers, and the Nuggets hit 10 of 18 from deep as a team.

Zach LaVine had 20 points and five assists and Andrew Wiggins scored 23 points for the Timberwolves, who have lost seven of their last eight games. They are 3-10 at home this season.

The Nuggets rallied from 18 down in the third quarter to beat the Timberwolves in Denver on Friday night, but needed no such effort in the second night of a back-to-back on Tuesday. They scored 18 points off of 10 Minnesota turnovers and outrebounded the Wolves 39-31 to cruise to the win.

The Nuggets played without rookie Emmanuel Mudiay, who was out with a sprained right ankle. Veteran Jameer Nelson started, but it was Foye who made the biggest impact with Denver's second unit.

Foye, the former Timberwolves draft night acquisition, looked right at home back at Target Center. He scored 17 in the second quarter, easily surpassing his previous season high for points in a game (13). Foye had been shooting 29 percent on the season and 19.7 percent from 3-point range, but he hit his first five from deep against the Wolves.

His fifth 3 of the second quarter gave Denver a 58-41 lead, and the Nuggets were never threatened the rest of the way.

The Timberwolves had a surprisingly feisty defense during their 8-8 start, helping them earn impressive victories at Atlanta, Chicago and Miami. But it's been dreadful on that end during this swoon, with poor shooting teams like the Nuggets and Lakers feasting on wide open looks over and over again.

Minnesota surrendered an average of 109 points per game over its previous seven, which included losses to three struggling teams in the Blazers, Lakers and Nuggets, who racked up 63 points in the first half and were shooting 62 percent well past the midpoint of the third quarter.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 18 points and six rebounds for Minnesota.

Lakers 113, Bucks 95

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant had 22 points and six assists during the Los Angeles Lakers' 113-95 victory over the Bucks on Tuesday night in Milwaukee's first game since ending Golden State's 24-0 start to the season.

D'Angelo Russell had 19 points and seven assists as the Lakers took a 22-point lead in the third quarter and cruised to their second victory in 15 games, improving to 4-21 in Bryant's farewell season.

Michael Carter-Williams scored 19 points for the Bucks, who played without leading scorer Greg Monroe in their first game since snapping the Warriors' 28-game winning streak dating to last season.

Monroe was a late scratch with a sore left knee for the Bucks, who have lost 10 straight road games.

The Lakers pushed their lead to 18 points in the third quarter on a four-point play by Bryant. Moments later, Los Angeles was up by 22—its largest lead at any point in the entire season.

Lou Williams scored 16 points, while Julius Randle had 14 points and 14 rebounds. The Lakers had a season-high 26 assists and produced seven double-digit scorers for the first time this year.

Bryant had a productive, relatively efficient game in the Lakers' return to Staples Center after a 1-7 road trip. He also got the fourth quarter off after playing in his 11th game in 18 days.

Bryant shot an air ball on his first attempt, but later hit four straight to finish the first quarter with 10 points. He hit three 3-pointers and finished 7 for 15 from the field, building on his improved shooting in the past four games.

Kings 107, Rockets 97

In Sacramento, California, Sacramento star DeMarcus Cousins' manager was ejected for slapping at Rockets guard Jason Terry on Tuesday night during the Kings' 107-97 win over Houston.

Trailing the play on a dunk by Sacramento's Ben McLemore, Terry put his hand out to slow down as he neared fans sitting along the baseline.

Andrew Rogers, Cousins' manager, slapped at Terry's arm. Terry stopped, turned around and started to step toward Rogers, who was then ejected from his seat.

Cousins had 26 points and 12 rebounds. The Kings never trailed after the midway point in the second quarter in a sloppy game that included 49 turnovers and three technical fouls, one on Cousins.

Starting for suspended Rajon Rondo, Darren Collison had 14 points, a season-high 13 assists and six rebounds as the Kings won their third in a row. Rondo was penalized one game by the NBA for using a gay slur against official Bill Kennedy in a game Dec. 3 against Boston in Mexico City.

Omri Casspi had 19 points and Rudy Gay had 17 points and 13 rebounds for the Kings.

James Harden had 33 points for Houston. Terry and Patrick Beverly both added 14.

Rockets star Dwight Howard was in foul trouble and was not much of a factor. He left the game early in the third quarter with his fourth foul and finished with four points and four points in 28 minutes.

The Kings led 82-74 entering the fourth quarter and three early 3-pointers by Marcus Belinelli helped them maintain control in snapping an eight-game losing streak against Houston.

Meanwhile, Rondo has offered a stronger apology for directing a gay slur at veteran NBA referee Bill Kennedy.

Rondo said Monday his actions toward Kennedy on Dec. 3 were out of frustration and not meant to offend anyone.

Rondo issued a statement Tuesday addressing those who viewed his initial statement as a non-apology. He said: ''I want to be clear, from the bottom of my heart that I am truly sorry for what I said to Bill. There is no place on or off the court for language that disrespects anyone's sexual orientation. That is not who I am or what I believe and I will strive every day to be a better person.''

Kennedy told Yahoo Sports he is gay.

Rondo is serving a one-game suspension

Basketball Hall of Fame cuts wait for players to 4 years

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP)— Basketball players will now be eligible for the Hall of Fame four years after they retire, creating the potential for Shaquille O'Neal and Yao Ming to headline a powerful class of 2016.

It's one of the new rules for the Springfield, Massachusetts, shrine.

The previous requirement was that a player be retired for five full seasons. Because of the enshrinement calendar, that meant players would be out of the game for six years before they could be inducted.

O'Neal, a four-time NBA champion and one of the game's dominant centers, and Yao, the No. 1 pick of the 2002 draft whose success was a catalyst for basketball's growth in China, both retired after the 2010-11 season.

The Hall also shut down its ABA committee. Hall chairman Jerry Colangelo says the group has served its purpose. Another change was to allow the women's screening committee to put forward four finalists instead of two.

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame will announce its candidates for next year's enshrinement ceremony next week. Finalists will be announced during the NBA All-Star weekend in February and the inductees will be unveiled on April 4 in Houston on the day of the NCAA championship game.

After $184M deal with Cubs, Heyward wants to make history

AP

Jason Heyward is introduced by the Cubs at Spiaggia Restaurant after finalizing a $184 million, eight-year contract with the club, the largest deal in team history.

CHICAGO (AP)—Jason Heyward knows Theo Epstein ended a long championship drought in Boston and understands how epic it would be to bring a title to Chicago's North Side.

"It'd be a beautiful thing to win a World Series," Heyward said Tuesday after finalizing a $184 million, eight-year contract with the Cubs, the largest deal in team history. "To do it in this city, it's a no-brainer that it would be making history. You see what Theo's done with the Red Sox in 2004 and sort of reverse the curse, kind of set the country upside down."

After adding pitchers John Lackey and Adam Warren along with infielder Ben Zobrist, the Cubs introduced Heyward at Spiaggia Restaurant, a favorite of President Barack Obama and the same place where they held a news conference for Jon Lester exactly one year earlier after signing the pitcher to a $155 million deal. Chicago still seeks its first Series title since 1908.

"We saw it as a real unique opportunity," said Epstein, who left Boston in October 2011 to become the Cubs' president of baseball operations. "We feel like Jason is a real impact player because of how talented he is in all the different phases of the game."

Heyward has the right to opt out of the deal after three seasons and become a free agent again at age 29, having earned $78 million under the deal with the Cubs. He also has a conditional opt out after the 2019 season, if he has 550 plate appearances that year.

He receives a $20 million signing bonus, payable in four $5 million installments each April 1 from 2024-27. He gets salaries of $15 million in 2016, $21.5 million in each of the next two years, $20 million in 2019, $21 million apiece in 2020 and 2021 and $22 million in each of the final two seasons.

Heyward has a full no-trade provision through 2018, then during 2019 and 2020 has 12 teams he cannot be dealt to without his consent. If he remains with the Cubs, after the 2020 season he would have the right to block any trade because of he would be a 10-year veteran who has spent five seasons with his current team.

Because the signing bonus is paid after the expiration of the contract, Major League Baseball evaluated the deal as having a present-day value of $177,633,616.

Chicago won 97 games last season, then beat NL Central rivals Pittsburgh in the wild-card game and St. Louis in the NL Division Series. Heyward said he didn't watch the Cubs' celebration but did get a glimpse at the playoff atmosphere at Wrigley Field. The Cubs then were swept by the New York Mets in the NL Championship Series.

As busy as they have been since then, the Cubs still have flexibility because they did not part with any of their top prospects.

"That does allow us)—whether it's this winter or trade deadline or next offseason)— to be I think a threat to make significant trades that can help the ballclub going forward," Epstein said. "It doesn't necessarily have to happen the next couple of months. We feel great about the team as it is constituted now."

The Cubs plan to use Heyward in center field, with occasional time in right. Corner time is more likely if the Cubs trade Jorge Soler for a center fielder.

An All-Star in 2010, Heyward hit .293 with 13 homers and 60 RBIs last season. He helped St. Louis win the NL Central after spending his first five big league seasons with Atlanta.

The Cubs are counting on him to help strengthen a batting order that includes young sluggers Anthony Rizzo, NL Rookie of the Year Kris Bryant and Kyle Schwarber along with Addison Russell.

Heyward had more lucrative offers. But the Cubs' youth and the presence of manager Joe Maddon were two big reasons why he left St. Louis for Chicago even though he does not expect the Cardinals to fade from contention anytime soon.

"I felt like if I were to look up in three years and see a completely different team, that would kind of be different for me," Heyward said. "Chicago really offers an opportunity to come and really be introduced to the culture by a young group of guys, grow up with them and watch them grow up and still watch myself grow up and have some fun with familiar faces for a long time."

Pete Rose holds out hope for Hall of Fame

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Pete Rose believes he still has a chance to one day get back in baseball. In the meantime, he's turning his attention to the Hall of Fame.

Rose said Tuesday he is a changed person even if he still likes to bet on an occasional baseball game. And while commissioner Rob Manfred rejected his bid to get back in the game partly because Rose still bets legally in this gambling town, he says he still has a lot to offer the sport.

"All I look forward to being some day is a friend of baseball," Rose said. "I want baseball and Pete Rose to be friends. I want to say I'm not an outsider looking in. I have grandkids, and they want their grandpa to be associated with baseball."

Baseball's career hits leader said he was disappointed at Manfred's decision not to end a ban that has stretched more than a quarter century. But he held out hope he could still one day be inducted into the Hall of Fame, joining teammates such as Johnny Bench and Joe Morgan from the Big Red Machine of the 1970s.

"It would be nice to have the opportunity to go to the Hall of Fame," Rose said. "My whole life has been a Hall of Fame life just by the association with the teammates I had."

At a news conference fronting his restaurant on the Las Vegas Strip, Rose said he couldn't rewrite history but still believes even at age 74 that he can one day be back in baseball. He said he was sorry for his mistakes of the past, which included betting on games while with the Cincinnati Reds at a time he said his gambling habit was out of control.

Those days are over, he said, though he still bets on sports and horse racing.

"I don't live in Las Vegas because I gamble," he said. "I live in Las Vegas because it's where my job is. I'm a recreational gambler now. If I want to go home and watch a game, I might make a small wager on it."

Rose was contrite and somewhat upbeat in offering his first comments since Manfred on Monday rejected his application for reinstatement. But he refused to be drawn into the debate of whether players linked to steroids should be allowed in the Hall of Fame when anyone on the permanently excluded list— Rose is currently the only living person on it— cannot be on a Hall of Fame ballot.

Rose said he believes Manfred will be a great commissioner, but that Manfred was put in a tough spot in having to rule on Rose's reinstatement 26 years into a lifetime ban. He also said his meeting with Manfred earlier this year—where he first denied still betting on baseball and then admitted he did— could have gone better.

"I'm a good guy, to be honest with you," Rose said. "I tried to be as honest as I could with the commissioner, but I made some mistakes and I clarified them. Some of his questions, though, I kind of panicked."

He also would not comment on Manfred's decision to keep him out of baseball partly because he still does gamble on baseball while at the same time Major League Baseball has a stake in the daily fantasy site DraftKings.

"You can make that evaluation. I'm not a DraftKings guy. I'm not an online guy," said Rose, who had 4,256 hits in a career that stretched from 1963-86. "I just try to have fun and live my life and have some enjoyable moments."

FIFA officials plead not guilty in soccer corruption probe

NEW YORK (AP)—A sprawling U.S. bribery prosecution that has scandalized soccer's governing body took another step forward on Tuesday, with the former president of Honduras and a former FIFA vice president pleading not guilty at their first court appearance and authorities announcing that two other defendants would be extradited to face charges as well.

Former president Rafael Callejas, a current member of FIFA's television and marketing committee, was ordered held without bail at a hearing in federal court in Brooklyn. A judge agreed to release former FIFA vice president Juan Angel Napout on $20 million bond with various restrictions, including electronic monitoring and home detention.

Both men are facing racketeering conspiracy and wire fraud charges for their alleged roles in a bribery scheme involving lucrative broadcasting and hosting rights for the World Cup and soccer's other biggest events. Their lawyers left the courtroom on Tuesday without speaking to reporters.

Callejas' appearance came after Honduras officials say he decided to travel to the United States on the advice of his lawyers. Napout, a former president of the South American confederation from Paraguay, had consented to extradition from Switzerland, where he was arrested on Dec. 3.

The two were among 16 new defendants, most from Central and South America, named in a revised indictment that was unsealed earlier this month. U.S. prosecutors charged 14 others, including seven top FIFA officials arrested at Baur au Lac hotel in Zurich, in May.

On Tuesday, authorities announced that two of the original 14—Nicolas Leoz, another former head of the South American football confederation and Eduardo Li, former head of the Costa Rican football federation —would be extradited to the United States. A Paraguay appeals court approved Leoz's extradition, while Li withdrew his appeal and agreed to depart Switzerland and be turned over to U.S. authorities.

The indictment alleges that in 2012 a marketing firm wired $500,000 to a Panama bank account so it could be paid as bribes to Callejas and another soccer official in exchange for broadcasting rights to qualifier matches for the 2022 World Cup. The indictment identified Napout as a member of a bloc of soccer officials known as the "Group of Six" that would receive annual bribes in exchange for supporting FIFA contracts with another marketing firm.

In a year-end letter to 209 FIFA member federations, suspended FIFA President Sepp Blatter has written he is "bewildered" by allegations he faces and will go before the FIFA ethics committee on Thursday with "a strong belief in justice." He wrote that "although I have been suspended I am not isolated and will certainly not be silenced."

Callejas served as president of Honduras from 1990 to 1994.

Familiar faces sign up for Art of War 10

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Almost all of the fighters who signed up for Art of War 10: Grappling and Submission are regular fixtures in various mixed martial arts events on Saipan.

Trench Tech promoter Cuki Alvarez is organizing the open house grappling tournament this Saturday, Dec. 19, from 10am to 4pm at the Trench Tech Gym in Garapan.

The grappling and submission event, based on an initial list, attracted 56 individuals spread out in the flyweight, bantamweight, featherweight, lightweight, welterweight, middleweight, and heavyweight divisions.

A.J. Aldan leads the cast in the 200-125lb category and will be joined by twins Jadrien and Jonathan Camacho, Jimmy Kaipat, Damon Brel, Timothy Salas, Pilling Terlaje, and E.J. Hemley.

JON PEREZ
Jordan Manglona, top, competes against Tinian's Paul Ayuyu in the bantamweight division of last year's Art of War 9: Grappling and Submission. Manglona will be seeing action as a lightweight this Saturday.

Hemley will also compete as a bantamweight along with Keoni Castro, Denny Jepen, and Lorenzo Attao.

Alvarez said that he plans to combine the flyweight and bantamweight divisions depending on the final outcome of entries.

Attao, last year's AOW 9 top flyweight, will also see action as a featherweight together with Jepen, Josh Duenas, Tabi Jay Muña, Mark Nuique, and Mike Muña.

Cousins Shane and Roman Alvarez will lead the competitive lightweight class that also has Vince Masga, Jasper Van De Maas, Lucas Nutting, Rich Aldan, Elden Dela Cruz, Jordan Mangloña, Jamal Mresbang, Neil Camacho, Jeff Garcia, T.J. Tudela, and Scott Jo.

Derick Naog, Ken Tanzawa, Joe Lee, and Dane Salazar will be joining Shane, Roman, and Van Der Maas in the welterweight division.

Van Der Maas and Tanzawa also entered the middleweight category and they will compete against Kier Agda, Renz Benghit, T.J. Castro, Phil David, and Ken Santos.

Former wrestlers Adam Harris, Joe Ocampo, Slade Adelbai, the returning Kelvin Fitial, Josh Castro, and Mark Mendiola headline a tough heavyweight class.

An absolute gi open division, meaning all weight classes and belts, will be the final event to be contested in this weekend's competition.

Saipan Ice routs CUC, ends skid

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Ice & Water snapped its four-game losing skid after whipping Commonwealth Utilities Corp., 75-60, in last Monday's curtain-raiser in the 2nd JP World Corp. Customer Appreciation Basketball League at Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

The victory was only the second in six games for Saipan Ice & Water, which got its first nearly five months ago against Cape Air (withdrew from the league). CUC, on the other hand, continued its slide, absorbing its fifth loss in six matches.

Four Saipan Ice players teamed up in the win with Derrick Rangamar leading the way, tallying a game-high 18 points. Michael Welson also finished in double figures with his 17, while Henry William and Treat Kaipat chipped in 15 and 11, respectively.

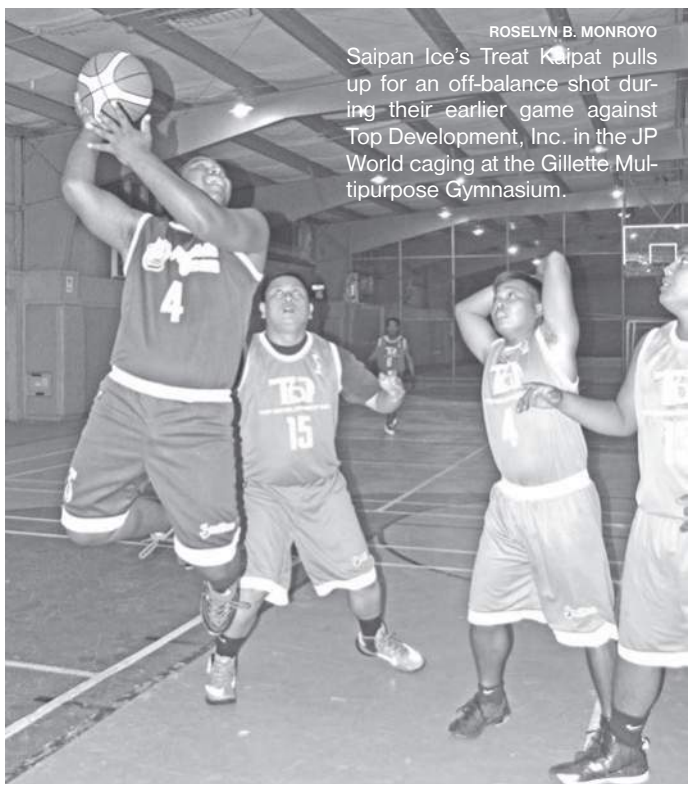
William dropped 8 of his total points in the third quarter to help turn a 39-32 halftime edge to a big 62-42 advantage, going into the final canto. Saipan Ice never relinquished the twin-digit lead from thereon and capped the 15-point win in style by making its last three shots from downtown.

Iguel had back-to-back triples to end the match, while Welson knocked in the other one. John Santos also had two triples for CUC in the fourth and added 4 more markers, but these were not enough to spark a comeback.

Meanwhile, Joeten notched its third straight win and improved to a 5-1 record following a 79-71 triumph against Docomo (2-4) last Friday.

Joeten got off to a strong start to take control of the match and hung tough against a Docomo rally in the fourth quarter to extend its run. Joeten led by 17 at the end of the first half, 25-8, behind the 9 and 8 points of Alex Lauron and Dixon Kwon, respectively.

Docomo, which had only two players scoring in the first quarter, played catch up since then and managed to slice the deficit to single digit in the fourth with Robert Sanciangco, Kevin McCale, and Tony Diaz working together. However, Docomo fell short in the end, as Joeten built enough cushion to offset the former's 29-point production in the final canto.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan Ice's Treat Kaipat pulls up for an off-balance shot during their earlier game against Top Development, Inc. in the JP World caging at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Friday Game

Joeten 79 – Lauron 16, Kwon 15, Rasa 11, Benghit 9, Villegas 9, Sambile 7, Moises 7, Tobias 5.

Docomo 71 – Sanciangco 26, McCale 19, Diaz 15, Sablan 7, Mendiola 4.

Scoring by quarters: 25-8, 47-30, 69-42, 79-71.

Monday Game

Saipan Ice 75 – Rangamar 18, Welson 17, William 15, Kaipat 11, Iguel 8, Olopai 4, Villagomez 2.

CUC 60 – Simada 14, Santos 11, Nunez 10, Poquiz 9, Camacho 8, Lieto 8.

Scoring by quarters: 18-19, 39-32, 62-42, 75-60.

Manning set to return to practice for first time in a month

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP)—Peyton Manning is set to return to practice Wednesday for the first time in a month, but he'll be a sideline spectator again Sunday when Brock Osweiler makes his fifth consecutive start Sunday at Pittsburgh.

The Denver Broncos said coach Gary Kubiak met with his QBs on Tuesday and laid out his plan for the week.

Manning had a trio of throwing sessions indoors and away from his teammates last week after he had his hard cast and then a walking boot removed from his left foot the previous week.

Manning stood on the sideline Sunday after skipping Denver's trips to Chicago and San Diego and watching the Broncos win over New England from inside the locker room area. He has been dealing with a torn plantar fascia along with sore ribs and an aching throwing shoulder.

The Broncos are 3-1 in Osweiler's starts and 7-2 when Manning starts, although Denver has struggled to find the end zone no matter who's taking the snaps.

The Broncos have gone seven quarters without an offensive touchdown. They settled for four field goals Sunday when they wasted an historical effort by the league's top defense—holding the Raiders to minus 12 yards in the first half—in losing, 15-12.

BLUE HAUS

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on his daredevil drive.

While the PIC- GMJ/IKKI tiff was a close match, it was a different story for the playoff game between Blue Haus and Armatech.

Blue Haus set up the easy win after breaking away in the second quarter, which started with the winning squad ahead by only 6, 20-14. Blue Haus then made it a 42-28 advantage at halftime after spreading the wealth in the second period. Six different players hit the board for Blue Haus in the second frame with Jeff Garcia leading the way, knocking in 7 markers off the bench.

Blue Haus went on to continue drawing baskets from every player in fielded in the game in the third quarter, while Armatech still could not get its offensive game going with only Mike Asuhan converting more than one field goal for his squad.

By the end of the third, Blue Haus has increased its advantage to 28, 68-40, and with the game in the bag it slowed down a bit in the final period, while Armatech started to pick up garbage points to bring the deficit to 18 in the end.

Marlon De Dios and Garcia led four Blue Haus players who scored in double figures, recording 12 apiece. Manolo Manalo and Angelo Fernando chipped in 10 each, while Brendon Talania, Bruce Berline, Bert Demapan and Mel Capalad combined for 29 markers. Asuhan paced Armatech with his 17 points.

Meanwhile, Islander and Maplas duel for the second and last finals berth in the east division tonight with the winner facing MJD Enterprise in the title match.

Blue Haus 84 – De Dios 12, Garcia 12, Manalo 10, Fernando 10, Talania 9, Berline 8, Demapan 6, Capalad 6, Velalsco 2, Moises 2.

Armatech 66 – Asuhan 17, Crisostomo 14, Moreno 14, Tolosa 12, Malasarte 5, Canedo 4.

Scoring by quarters: 20-14, 42-28, 68-40, 84-66.

SANTOS'

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followed for a month. Then I tried to follow a Russian weightlifting program for the remaining months until the competition," added Santos.

He said that he wasn't expecting to win as he knew that he would be facing tougher and more seasoned opponents. "Because Guam lifters were strong and lifted heavy during the competition."

"Weight wise I was more prepared in the Micro Games. As for strength and training, I was more prepared for the Guam tournament," added the Northern Marianas College education student with focus on rehabilitation and human services.

Santos said he enjoyed competing against the Guam lifters and he now plans to join next year's Oceania Weightlifting Championship, which is an Olympic qualifying event for the Rio de Janeiro Games next year, to be held in Fiji.

"I get to meet new people and make new friends. I found the Guam weightlifters intimidating since I follow some of them on Instagram and I know they are strong. I'm going to try to join the 2016 Oceania championships but we'll see on the availability of the funds."

He is also hoping that the CNMI's weightlifting federation would get organized before the Oceania event so they could help him with his plan.

SSC

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In the longer relay race, the quartet of Kento, Welch, Lennosuke, and Villacrusis timed in at 4:21.54 to finish ahead of the foursome of Jinnosuke, Boyer, Taiga, and Wang, who combined for 4:32.34.

In the girls 9 to 10 200m freestyle race, Tsunami Saipan's Ashley Dangol, Nanaka Watanabe, Kana Suzuki, and Asaka Litulumar capped the event at the 2:36.27 mark to beat the 2:54.13 of their teammates Shoko Litulumar, Risa Sekiguchi, Shaunalyn Babauta, and Ayumi Obligacion.

The other 200m freestyle relay races in the girls division had only Tsunami Saipan swimmers competing. Maria Batallones joined forces with Mizuki Suzuki, Seiyul Hong, and Seoni Park in the 11 to 12 age group and they timed in at 3:40.80, while the team of Miku Tammy, Rei Sekiguchi, Kathrine Illahi, and Kyona Rivera submitted 2:20.62 in the 13 to 14 division. In the over 17 age group, Angel De Jesus, Aika Watanabe, Sophia Gauran, and Daime Rivera logged 2:17.62.

In the boys 9 to 10, Tsunami Saipan's Sean Gil, Hans Xu, Isaiah Aleksenko, and Anthony Camacho-Deleon Guerrero posted 2:27.34 to prevail against SSC's Wataru, De Courteny, Mark Jainier Chavez, and Dino Sato, who registered 3:10.18.

Takeru Jim, Cojiro Kaga, Zeno Iwami, and Kengo Sato of SSC raced in the U8 division and clocked in at 4:29.34, while Tsunami Saipan's Aasih Dangol, Rentaro Suzuki, Arman Rechucher, and Jaden Castro swam in the 11 to 12 age group and tallied 2:58.65. The Tsunami Saipan foursome of Takumi Sugie, Nelson Batallones, Mark Maestro, and Juhn Tenorio recorded the fastest time in the event with their 2:07.57, while SSC had a mixed team in the 11 to 12 age group with Akira, Miyawaki, Andrei Kaith Lynn Chavez, and Coume timing in at 2:38.30.

2015 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycling Race

PHOTOS By JON PEREZ

Guam's Patrick Camacho, left, talks with Chinese-Taipei cyclists at the starting line (across the Mariana Resort & Spa) of the 2015 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycling Race held last Dec. 5.

Saipan's Wynn Brillo was among the young riders who joined the 100K race.

Jerome Diyco heads up to Radar Hill.

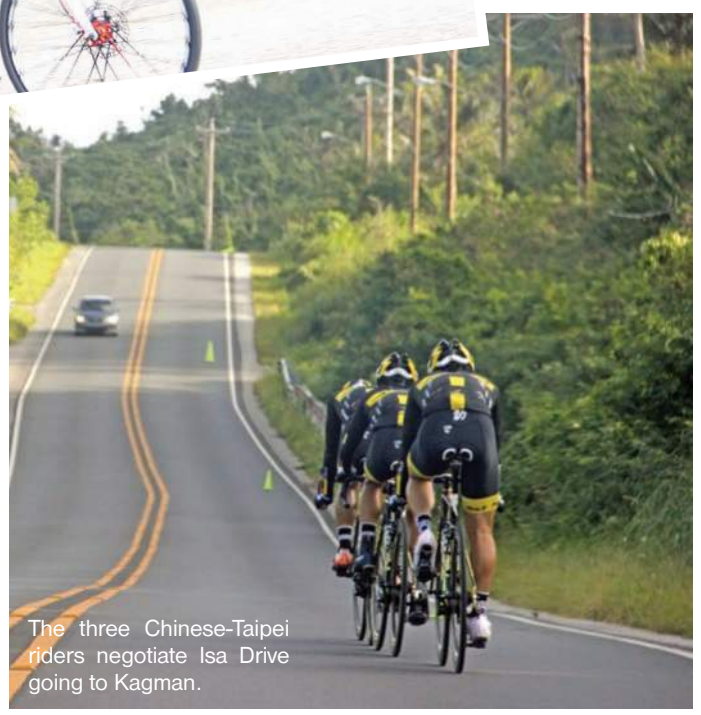
Japan's Ryutaro Nakamura, left, leads a five-man group of riders that heads further in the 100-kilometer race course.

Nap Dizon flashes the No. 1 sign while he heads back to the finish line at the Mariana Resort.

Robert Tamondong slows down as he nears the finish line.

Mieko Carey steers her bike after making the turn at Radar Hill.

Jake Jones, left, rides along with South Korean Kaon Cho on the road going up Radar Hill.



The three Chinese-Taipei riders negotiate Isa Drive going to Kagman.

Saipan's John Moreno slows down and makes the thumbs up sign while going up the road heading to Bird Island.

James, Love help Cavs clobber Celtics

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Sports

Familiar faces sign up for Art of War 10

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Lifter Santos' curiosity pays off

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
GetFit CNMI's Raymond Santos, center, bested Guam's Shane Concepcion, left, and Alex Johnson for the overall crown in last Saturday's Micronesia Weightlifting Invitational at The Jungle inside the Father Duenas Memorial School in Mangilao.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Raymond Santos' curiosity for the Olympic sport of weightlifting earned him victories in two regional competitions.

Santos, in an email to the Saipan Tribune, said that seeing one of his friends while working out in a gym sparked his interest in weightlifting.

"I started with this sport back in 2013 when I saw a good friend of mine do types of lift [similar to weightlifting] at Gold's Gym. I tried it out and immediately fell in love with the sport," added Santos of GetFit CNMI.

In a short span, the 24-year-old managed to win medals in the men's 62kg division of last year's Micronesian Games in Pohnpei and recently in the Micronesia Weightlifting Invitational organized by the Guam Weightlifting Federation.

He ruled the same weight division in last Saturday's event held at the The Jungle inside the Father Duenas Memorial School in Mangilao then added the overall crown to his growing collection.

Santos, who weighed 61.20kg in the tournament, had lifts of 100kg in the snatch, and 120kg in the clean and jerk for a 220kg total. He had a final tally of 321.154kg based on the Sinclair method.

Last year, Santos, a special education teacher aid at Koblerville Elementary School, went home with three silver medals from the Pohnpei Micro Games between the gold and bronze medals each of the Marshall Islands' Peter Enoch and Switon Batin Jr.

He said that he trained for more than three months even after Saipan was still reeling from the onslaught brought by Typhoon Soudelor in August.

"My lifting partners were Joe Jucutan and Dave Barnhouse, who came up with a weightlifting program that I

See SANTOS' on Page 26

More PBTs for SSC swimmers

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Only Saipan Swim Club swimmers joined the three other individual freestyle races in the SSC Double Distance Meet and the hosts capitalized on the opportunity by recording 15 more personal best times last Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

In the 800m freestyle, all five SSC members who did the 16-lap swim before reset their PBTs. Kento Akimaru was the fastest at 10:23.38 (from 10:39.60), followed by Taiga Sato (11:02.48), Christian Villacrusis (11:25.73), Caleb Wang (11:42.31) and Salofi Welch (11:42.92). Lennosuke Suzuki tried the longest race of the day for the first time and had an impressive 10:33.72, while R.J. Pierce and David Boyer also debuted in the same event and clocked in at 11:38.41 and 12:11.39, respectively.

Lennosuke swam in the 400m freestyle, too and his 5:09.96 eclipsed his previous PBT of 5:30.39. Five other SSC swimmers gained PBTs and the list includes Lennosuke's younger brother Jinnosuke (5:25.05), Coume Kaga (6:17.98), Taiyo Akimaru (6:14.59), Taiga (5:16.37), and Kento (4:49.45).

Coume and Jinnosuke bagged their third PBTs (including their records in the 100m freestyle) in the first meet of the season after submitting 3:00.74 and 2:32.41 in the 200m freestyle, respectively. Kaga's previous PBT read at 3:11.82, while Jinnosuke's old PBT was 2:40.06.

Other SSC swimmers who joined the 200m freestyle event with no seed times were Wataru Kadokura (4:08.49), Robert De Courteny (4:11.56), and Rintaro Miyawaki (3:08.77).

Meanwhile, last weekend's competition also featured relay races—400m and 200m freestyle.

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Swimmers get ready at the starting block during the 200m freestyle race in last Saturday's SSC Double Distance Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

Blue Haus enters semis; PIC, GMJ/IKKI in standoff

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Pacific Islands Club's Sean Rabasto splits the defense of GMJ/IKKI Wholesale's Ignacio Borja, left, and Marlon Sison during the second quarter of their semis game in the west division of the San Antonio caging last Tuesday at the San Antonio court.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Blue Haus completed the semis cast in the west division of the 2015 San Antonio Community Action Network Basketball League, while the battle for the first finals berth in that group has yet to be decided as Pacific Islands Club and GMJ/IKKI Wholesale's game was rained-out last Tuesday night at the San Antonio court.

Blue Haus played in the first game against Armatech and cruised to an 84-66 victory to join PIC, GMJ/IKKI, and Cholos 8th Division in the Final Four. PIC and GMJ/IKKI collided in the second match of the night, but the game was suspended at the 8:39 mark of the third quarter with the game tied at 36-all due to rain.

The match will resume on a later date (opposing teams still have yet to agree with the date of the continuation) with GMJ/IKKI's Allison Dizon taking two free throws after drawing a foul on PIC's Darwin Barbo. The second half of the semis game began with GMJ/IKKI holding a 36-32 lead. PIC then managed to force a deadlock early in the third after Raymark Castro canned a short baseline jumper and Jack Aranda connected

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